



TALES

FANTASY



10¢

from
the

CRYPT



UNIQUE STONECUTTING GRAVESTONES

NO... NO... IT CAN'T BE! THAT
NAME HE'S CUTTING ON THE
GRAVESTONE... THAT'S MY NAME!
AND MY DATE OF BIRTH! BUT
THE DATE OF DEATH... THAT'S
TODAY!

ALEX KORDOVA
PROP.

HERE LIES
THEODORE
J. WARKEN
BORN APRIL 25, 1901
DIED JUNE 9, 1950

IN
MEMORY OF



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HENRY E. SCHULTZ, Executive Director
Association of Comics Magazine Publishers
205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, New York

The following is a complete list of



titles, all of which bear the Code-Seal of The Association of Comics Magazine Publishers.

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TALES FROM THE CRYPT

•
THE HAUNT OF FEAR

•
THE VAULT OF HORROR

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WEIRD SCIENCE

•
WEIRD FANTASY

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MODERN LOVE

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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S TALE



WELL...HEH, HEH...I SEE IT'S TIME FOR ME TO TELL YOU ANOTHER *SPINE-TINGLING* TALE. ONE OF MY VAST COLLECTION OF *GALLIES* WHICH I KEEP HERE IN THE *CRYPT*! THIS STORY IS A FAVORITE OF MINE. ONE THAT I GUARANTEE WILL MAKE YOUR BLOOD RUN COLD AND YOUR HAIR STAND ON END! I CALL IT:

THE THING FROM THE SEA!



YOU ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN A FRIGHTFUL ADVENTURE...CONCERNING A LUXURIOUS OCEAN LINER AND THE STRANGE AND UNEXPLAINED EVENTS THAT WILL OCCUR IN

STATEROOM 13!

YOU ARE ON A CROWDED PIER IN NEW YORK TRYING TO SECURE PASSAGE ON THE "OCEAN QUEEN," BOUND FOR ENGLAND! THE TRIP IS URGENT, AND YOU ARE PLEADING WITH THE PURSER...

BUT YOU MUST HAVE ONE BERTH OPEN... I'LL TAKE ANY GLASS!

WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT, SIR... THAT IS... IF YOU'RE NOT SUPERSTITIOUS.



WHAT WONDERFUL LUCK! ONLY ONE OF THE TWO BERTHS IN STATE-ROOM 13 HAS BEEN TAKEN! YOU MAY THE PURSER AND BOARD THE SHIP! AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON... FOR AS YOU REACH THE TOP OF THE GANGPLANK...

CAST OFF THE FORWARD LINES...

MAKE READY FOR DEPARTURE...

LAST CALL... ALL ABOARD THAT'S GOING ASHORE...



YOU WATCH AS THE DOGS SLIPS AWAY, THE LITTLE TUGS STRAINING AND PUSHING THE GIANT LINER OUT INTO MIDSTREAM? THEN...

MAY I TAKE YOUR BAGS AND SHOW YOU TO YOUR CABIN, SIR?

WHY THANK YOU, STEWARD?



AH... WHAT NUMBER STATE-ROOM DO YOU HAVE, SIR?

WHY... 13?



THE COLOR DRAINS FROM THE STEWARD'S CHEEKS... HIS EYES FILL WITH HORROR AS HE STARES AT YOU...

WHY, WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE STEWARD?

OH... ER... NOTHING, SIR... NOTHING!



THE STEWARD SETS YOUR BAGS DOWN IN YOUR STATE-ROOM, CHECKS THE PORTHOLE TO SEE THAT IT IS SECURELY BOLTED, AND THEN GOES TOWARD THE DOOR! THERE IS A GLOOM OF FEAR ON HIS FACE...

WHAT IS IT, OLD MAN? WHAT IS THERE ABOUT THIS CABIN THAT FRIGHTENS YOU?

I... I DON'T KNOW, ONLY... ONLY



NO ONE WHO HAS EVER BEEN ASSIGNED THIS CABIN HAS COMPLETED HIS CROSSING IN IT! SOMETHING... SOMEBODY... FRIGHTENS THEM INTO LEAVING IT! WHY ONE PASSENGER EVEN WENT MAD FROM WHAT HE SAW HERE.

WHY...? WHAT DID THEY SEE? TELL ME!



THE STEWARD MUMBLES SOMETHING ABOUT GHOSTS AND SLIPS FROM YOUR GRASP! YOU WATCH AS HE HURRIES DOWN THE CORRIDOR, AND THEN YOU CLOSE THE DOOR.

YOU STOW YOUR BELONGINGS IN YOUR ASSIGNED BERTH AND SURVEY THE CABIN! IT IS SMALL, WITH ONE PORTHOLE... AND THE TWO BERTHS...

AFTER DINNER YOU DECIDE TO TURN IN! YOU ARE TIRED, AND THE FRESH SEA AIR HAS MADE YOU SLEEPY.

GHOSTS... BAH! HE'S PROBABLY PLAYING A TRICK ON ME. SUGGESTION AND STUFF.

HMM... I WONDER WHO HAS THE UPPER? HIS BAGGAGE IS HERE! HE'S PROBABLY UPON DECK SAYING GOODBYE TO THE GOOD-OLD U.S.A.!

OH, HELLO! I GUESS YOU MUST BE MY ROOM-MATE! GLAD TO MEET YOU!

SAME HERE! RATHER SMALL STATE-ROOM, ISN'T IT? HAD TO TAKE IT... ONLY ONE LEFT!

YES... THAT'S WHAT THEY TOLD ME! WELL... GUESS I'LL TURN IN! I'M PRETTY TIRED!

ME, TOO! GLAD YOU'RE HERE, THOUGH! THE STEWARD TOLD ME SOME ANFUL TARN ABOUT THIS ROOM.

OH, I WOULDN'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY! HE'S PROBABLY PULLING YOUR LEG!

YES... WELL... GOOD-NIGHT!

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN ASLEEP. ONLY... SUDDENLY YOUR EYES ARE OPEN! YOUR STATE-ROOM SMELLS STRANGE! THE PECULIAR SMELL OF DAMPNESS... STALE SEA-WATER! AND YOU ARE COLD... A BUSH OF AIR IS COMING FROM THE OPEN PORTHOLE.

YOU GET UP AND STUMBLE TO THE PORTHOLE IN THE DARKNESS! THE BOLTS HAVE BEEN LOOSENED AND THE FIRE SPRAY FROM THE SEA WETS YOUR FACE! YOU BLAM IT SHUT, BOLTING IT TIGHTLY! AND THEN, FROM THE BERTH ABOVE YOURS, COMES A RUDDY-CURLING CRY.

BLAST! THE PORTHOLE IS OPEN! I'D BETTER CLOSE IT OR RISK A NAFTY COLO!

A-A-H-H-H!

WHAT THE...?

WITH A SINGLE LEAP, YOUR ROOMMATE SPRINGS FROM HIS BERTH TO THE FLOOR AND GASHES MADLY TOWARD THE STATEROOM DOOR...

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG? NO! NO! NO!



THE NEXT MORNING, THE SUN STREAMING THROUGH THE PORTHOLE AWAKENS YOU AND YOU DRESS QUICKLY! THE OUTFITS OF THE UPPER BERTH ARE DRAWN... YOU LEAVE WITHOUT DISTURBING YOUR ROOMMATE...

...PROBABLY ISN'T IN THE MOOD FOR BREAKFAST ANYWAY!



ON DECK, THE SHIP'S DOCTOR STOPS YOU...

...I WONDER IF YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT? WE FOUND YOUR ROOMMATE COVERING IN A PASSAGE... GASOLINE LIKE AN INK?

WHA...? YOU MEAN... HE DIDN'T COME BACK TO THE STATEROOM?



NO! WE HAVE HIM IN THE SHIP'S HOSPITAL! HE'S SUFFERING FROM SHOCK! CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HE SAW THAT MIGHT HAVE CAUSED IT?

I... I HAVE NO IDEA!



LOOK! I HAVE A LARGE SAILOR! WHY DON'T YOU BRING YOUR THINGS OVER THERE AND SPEND THE REST OF YOUR TIME WITH ME?

OH, REALLY, DOCTOR? ARE YOU IMPLYING THAT THE RUMORS ABOUT STATEROOM 13 ARE TRUE?



YOU LAUGH, REFUSING THE DOCTOR'S INVITATION! YOU SPEND THE DAY RELAXING IN YOUR DECK-CHAIR... SWIMMING IN THE SHIP'S POOL... AND PLAYING CANASTA IN THE GAME ROOM AFTER DINNER! IT IS VERY LATE WHEN YOU RETURN TO YOUR ROOM...

HO-HUM! GAD, I'M TIRED! THAT BERTH CERTAINLY LOOKS INVITING!



YOU CHECK THE PORTHOLE TO SEE THAT IT IS SECURELY BOLTED AND THEN YOU STRETCH OUT ON YOUR BERTH! YOU LAY AWAKE THINKING ABOUT THE AGONIZING SCREAM OF YOUR ROOMMATE THE NIGHT BEFORE, WHEN

WHAT THE...? THE PORTHOLE IS OPEN AGAIN...AND...PHEW...THAT SMELL OF SEAWATER AND DECAY.



YOU GET UP AND CLOSE IT! YOU ARE FRIGHTENED! YOU DISTINCTLY REMEMBER CHECKING IT BEFORE YOU WENT TO BED! YOU TIGHTEN THE BOLTS WITH ALL OF YOUR STRENGTH AND STAND THERE FOR A WHILE, STARING OUT TO SEA! SUDDENLY...

WHAT'S THAT? A MOAN... COMING FROM THE UPPER BERTH...



YOU SPRING TO THE BERTH AND TEAR THE CURTAINS APART...THRUSTING YOUR HAND IN, TO DISCOVER IF THERE IS ANYONE THERE...

THAT SMELL...THAT MAUSSEATING SMELL OF STAGNANT SALT-WATER! AND...AND...AAAAAHH!



YOU TAKE HOLD OF SOMETHING...SOMETHING COLD AND WET...ICY COLD...SOMETHING LIKE A MAN'S ARM! AND AS YOU PULL, THE CREATURE HURLS ITSELF FROM THE BERTH...A CLANNY, GOOY MASS!

KEEP AWAY!
KEEP AWAY!



IN AN INSTANT, THE HORRIBLE MONSTROSITY HAS CARTED OUT OF THE STATEROOM DOOR!

GOOD LORD! SO THAT'S WHAT IT IS! I'LL FOLLOW IT!



YOU CHASE THE DARK SHADOW THROUGH THE DIMLY LIT PASSAGE, AND UP TO THE COMPARTMENTWAY!

BLASTED THING!
IT'S GETTING AWAY!



YOU WATCH AS IT SEEMS TO GO OVER THE RAIL AND INTO THE SEA...

I...MUST BE DREAMING! THAT CURSED MEAL TONIGHT...IT...IT WON'T AGREE WITH ME!



YOU CANNOT RETURN TO THAT HORRIBLE ROOM! SO YOU WALK THE DECK, FINALLY CURLING UP IN A DECK CHAIR UNDER A STEAMER BLANKET TO SLEEP! A DREAMLESS SLEEP! THE MORNING SUN BLINDS YOU AS YOU ARE SHAKEN AWAKE...



OH... IT... IS IF YOU, CAPTAIN!

I WENT TO YOUR STATEROOM! YOU WEREN'T THERE! IS ANYTHING WRONG?

WELL, FRANKLY, CAPTAIN, THERE IS! SOMETHING VERY HORRIBLE HAPPENED IN MY STATEROOM LAST NIGHT! IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MY IMAGINATION BUT...



WHY DON'T YOU LET ME FIX YOU UP IN THE OFFICERS' QUARTERS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TRIP?

LOOK HERE CAPTAIN! CAN'T WE GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS? THERE *MUST* BE A LOGICAL EXPLANATION!

YOU ARE RIGHT, SHIP! ONLY, WHAT CAN I DO? I'M INCLINED TO BOARD UP THE ROOM!



THAT WILL SOLVE NOTHING! PERHAPS IT WAS ONLY A STOWAWAY... TRYING TO BUSHEN PEOPLE OUT OF THAT STATEROOM SO THAT HE CAN SPEND THE REMAINDER OF THE TRIP IN COMFORT! A HAH! PERHAPS!

SHIP! THAT THOUGHT HAS NEVER OCCURED TO ME! YOU MAY BE RIGHT! I TELL YOU WHAT!

TONIGHT, I WILL STAND WATCH WITH YOU! IF HE SHOWS HIS FACE, I'LL BE ABLE TO OVERPOWER HIM... TOGETHER!

GOOD, CAPTAIN! I'M GLAD YOU ARE TAKING A MORE REALISTIC ATTITUDE THAN YOUR SUPERSTITIOUS CREW!



YOU ARE RELIEVED THAT YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO SPEND ANOTHER NIGHT *ALONE* IN THAT ACCURSED STATEROOM! TOGETHER WITH THE CAPTAIN, TONIGHT YOU MAY SOLVE THIS BAFFLING PROBLEM!

YOUR DAY IS SPENT ANXIOUSLY... AND TOWARDS EVENING, YOU FIND YOURSELF BECOMING NERVOUS! FINALLY, IT IS TEN O'CLOCK... AND YOU MAKE YOUR WAY DOWN TO THE STATEROOM!



SEE YOU THEN, AT ABOUT TEN!

YES... STATEROOM 31!



AH, CAPTAIN! RIGHT ON TIME I SEE!

LET'S GO IN!

YOU CHECK THE PORTHOLE... YOU AND THE CAPTAIN... AND MAKE SURE THAT IT IS THIGHTLY BOLTED.

I'LL SIT HERE ON THE BERTH! WHY DON'T YOU SIT THERE ON MY WALISE...

GOOD! NOW... SHALL WE TURN OUT THE LIGHT.



THE ROOM IS DARK! ONLY THE HUM OF THE ENGINE IS HEARD... FAR BELOW, AND THE MUFFLED ROAR OF THE SEA, OUTSIDE! SUDDENLY



YOU RUSH TO THE PORTHOLE AND SLAM IT SHUT: SOME STRANGE FORCE SEEMS TO RESIST YOU

HERE WE GO, CAPTAIN! THINGS ARE BEGINNING TO POP!

I... I... AAAAAH!



YOU SPIN AROUND! THE *FRANK*, THE HORRIBLE CREATURE OF LAST NIGHT IS RISING OUT OF THE TOP BERTH! THE CAPTAIN IS SPRINGING BACK...

THAT'S... THAT'S IT! LET'S GET IT, CAPTAIN!

NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE YOU... YOU'RE DEAD! I MURDERED YOU!



I KILLED YOU... RIGHT THERE ...IN THAT BERTH! PUSHED YOU OUT THAT PORTHOLE INTO THE SEA! YOU CAN'T BE... YOU CAN'T...



HORRIFIED, YOU WATCH! THE CAPTAIN SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR... WHITE AS CHALK! THEN, SATISFIED, THE *FRANK* TURNS AND HURLS ITSELF OUT OF THE PORTHOLE...

GOOD LORD!



THE CAPTAIN IS DEAD... LITERALLY FRIGHTENED TO DEATH! AND AS YOU TURN TO LOOK AFTER THE THING, YOU ARE ASTOUNDED TO SEE THAT

THE PORTHOLE IS CLOSED AND... BOLTED!



WELL, HEN! AND THAT'S THE STORY, DEAR READER! THE CAPTAIN RECEIVED THE SHOCK OF HIS LIFE, EN? WELL, HE SHOULD HAVE REALIZED YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH MURDER... NOT EVEN AT SEA... ON YOUR OWN SHIP! OH, BY THE WAY! IF YOU EVER *REALLY* SAIL, THE "OCEAN QUEEN," ASK FOR

STATEROOM THIRTEEN! TELL 'EM I SENT YOU!



IF YOU LIKE MY TALES AND HAVE TIME TO ASSE... SEND ME A FEW LINES! WRITE TO: THE GIMP-KEEPER, RM. 70-1, DEPT. 80, 225 LAFAYETTE ST., NYC 10, N.Y.

END OF THE SEARCH

The sun had already gone down behind the heavy jungle growth along both banks of the sluggish stream, when Canady beached his flimsy boat and staggered ashore. A hundred yards back from the swampy water's edge was a village he had never seen before... a primitive circle of weathered huts he hadn't known existed on this unmapped offshoot of the Amazon River. But there was good reason why it had escaped his notice during all the time he had been managing the Plantation. In his fifteen years in the tropics, he had never before ventured so far into Brazil's interior.

Canady was led to a man's hut by two belonging to the village chief, and sampled with the manners of the people. In the process he gave only passing notice to the grim-faced natives who had escorted him here from his boat... hardly noticed the cold and appraising eyes that watched him settle on the cane floor opposite the Chief.

"They don't like my being here," Canady thought to himself as he pretended to rearrange his belt, his fingers moving methodically to make certain that his revolver was in its holster, just in case. "They're an ugly-looking bunch... and they hate my hanging into their village as much as I hate being here! But there's no choice... I've got to find a clue to Drucker's whereabouts!"

Canady spoke... sometimes searching for words to express himself, sometimes in a surge of blind Drucker... his plantation foreman... had disappeared a week before on an inspection trip, but vanished from sight as if swallowed up by the earth. He had come to find him... would pay anyone who knew where Drucker was. Had they seen a tall man with red hair... a man who had a flame-colored mustache?

One of the guides rose from behind him, and in the evening silence Canady watched him cross the hut to the door. Watched the native's tall foot as it passed momentarily over a grass mat and moved a several inches from its former resting place.

There was an object hidden under the mat and Canady looked at himself wondering whether the chief and his grim-faced tribesmen realized he had seen it. Canady began to rise, groping for his gun... and his hand trembled as it touched the empty holster. They knew... they had watched his face when he had seen the object!

And even as they began to close in on him from all sides of the hut, Canady was conscious of the shrunken human head there on the floor, underneath the grass mat that had been moved... the head with the red hair looking so ludicrous over the shrivelled skin... the head with the bushy flame-colored mustache!

In the language of the jungle people Can-

THERE WERE FOUR OF THEM. RICH, SPOILED, BORED! THEY HAD ALL THE MONEY THEY WANTED, THEY HAD BEEN EVERYWHERE AND DONE EVERYTHING! AND SO, WHEN SOMEONE SUGGESTED THAT THEY TRY THE MAGIC OF THE ANCIENTS, THEY BREWED...

a FATAL CAPER!



IT WAS DEER BOREDOM THAT MADE MARYLOU ANDERSON BUY THE DUSTY OLD BOOK IN THE DUSTY OLD BOOKSTORE...

A BOOK ON MAGIC!
HOW WONDERFUL!

PLEASE DO NOT TRY ANY OF THE SPELLS IN IT, MISS. I'VE HEARD THAT... THEY ACTUALLY... *WICK!*



PETER, DO YOU SEE *THIS?* ISN'T IT JUST TOO DUCKY? CALL UP JIM AND WINNIE, THIS INSTANT! INVITE THEM OVER. ...

WHAT BOOK? YOU DON'T TAKE ANY STOCK IN *THAT* JUNK, DO YOU? OH, WELL... MAYBE IT'LL BE BETTER THAN SITTING AROUND LISTENING TO SOMEBODY'S POEMS...



THAT NIGHT, IN JIM ROBERT'S ROOMS, THE FOUR GOT TOGETHER WITH SHOUTS OF LAUGHTER...

BABY, IT TOOK ME HOURS TO GET THESE THINGS!

WHERE'D YOU EVER DREAM UP ALL THIS, HARTLYN? TOADS' TONGUES? A LAMPING'S EAR? THE FOOT OF A OAT-OLD BAB!

IT GIVES ME THE GREENS BUT... I LOVE IT! HA! HA!

FIRST THE HAIR OF A BABY MOUSE...

THE NAILS OF A DOG BORN DEAD...

THEN THE WING OF A BABY BAT!



STIR, STIR! WHISPER WORDS TO TOUCH THE CAR...

RELTAK, BOO'S BANE!

DOGS' TONGUE, WITCH'S BUTT...



WE'RE ALL SICK OF EVERYTHING! I THOUGHT THAT WE COULD TRY SOME MAGIC SPELLS... OLD SPELLS WORKED IF GARLIGSTRO AND DEE! THEY WON'T WORK, OF COURSE... BUT IT WILL BE FUN TO TRY...



NOW TIP OF EAR AND SPIT OF TONGUE! NOSE FROM A DEAD MAN'S GRACE!

FINGER OF DUST FROM A MUMMY CASE!



AAAAA GUNNY! LOOK!

OH, MY...



WH... WHAT WAS IT? I... I DON'T SEE...

SOME MONSTER, WANT' AN ANFEL THING... HELP ME! MARTLYN... YOU ALL RIGHT? MARTLYN... ANSWER ME!



LOSD IN THE DARK ROOM, MARYLYN SCREAMS! HER HANDS BEAT UP AT SOMETHING VAST, UNSEEN! HER GREEN-TINTED FACE WRITHES BILLY IN STARK TERROR.

EEEEYYAAAGHH!!



GOT TO... HAVE LIGHT!
GOT TO... KNOW WHA...
WHAT HAPPENED



L-LOOK!
MARYLYN'S
SHOE...
AND
STOMP-
ING

WHATEVER...
IT WAS, MUST
HAVE RIPPED
HER... RIGHT
OUT OF
THEM!

MARYLYN!
OH MY POOR,
DEAR
MARYLYN...



LET'S GET... OUT
OF HERE! CALL
THE POLICE! GET
HELP FROM
SOMEBODY!

JIM! JIM,
NO! LISTEN...

WE CAN GET
HER BACK OUR-
SELVES, OLD MAN!
RELAX! RELAX!
MAYBE IT'S JUST
A MATTER OF
ANOTHER SPELL
OR SOMETHING



I DON'T LIKE THIS!
MAYBE IN A SISOY,
OR SOMETHING...
BUT THERE ARE A
LOT OF THINGS
LIKE THIS THAT
SCIENCE HAS NEVER
EXPLAINED! WE'D
BETTER

OH, JIM
DARLING,
HUSH UP!
WE HAVE
TO SAVE
MARYLYN
OURSELVES!

OUR FAULT, OLD
MAN! HERE, THE
LOOKS LIKE SOME-
THING A *SEANCE*
TO SPEAK TO THE
DEAD!



THIS IS CRAZY!
WHY DO WE EVER
START THIS?
LISTEN, I

KEEP YOUR
HANDS
STEADY,
JIM!

STOP SHAKING,
OLD MAN!
CONCENTRATE!
CONCENTRATE
ON MARYLYN



PERFECTLY... PLEASEME SOOONME TOOOO ME

IT'S MARYLYN!
SHE'S CALLING
TO ME!

OH, MY
HEAVEN!
OHhhh





JIM! GIVE ME A HAND!
HELP ME! SOMETHING
HAS HOLD OF ME.
I CAN'T SEEM TO
FIGHT IT OFF!

JIM, HOLD
ME! I'M
SO... SO
SCARED!



AAAAAGHHH!

HE'S GONE, TOO! ONLY
HIS COAT-SLEEVE RIPPED
OFF! NOW I AM GOING
FOR THE POLICE! THIS HAS
GONE TOO FAR...



NO! NO! NOT THE
POLICE! I WON'T
STAY HERE ALONE!
JIM, YOU AND I
WE CAN DO IT
BY A DIFFERENT
SPELL!

WHEE, YOU'RE
CRAZY! LET
GO OF ME!
PLEASE
CALM DOWN!



LISTEN TO
ME! I WON'T
LET YOU GO
FOR THE POLICE!
WE STARTED ALL
THIS! WE CAN
FINISH IT! BUT
YOU MUST HELP
ME! JIM!

ALL RIGHT!
I'LL DO WHAT-
EVER I CAN...



HEERLF USSER LÖÖÖÖÖ
INNEN THREE SÖÖÖÖÖ.

DO YOU HEAR? THEY ARE
CALLING TO US, FROM OVER
YONDER, FROM SOMEWHERE
BEYOND THE GRAVE...



I DON'T LIKE IT
BUT I'LL GO
THROUGH WITH
IT

STEADY, NOW!
I'M GOING TO
READ THE
SPELL.



BY THE SECRETS OF THE NINE,
BY THE SWORD OF SAMECH AND
THE SPINNING CHARIOT! BY
THE BAPTISM OF THE FOUR ELE-
MENTS AND THE KEYS OF
THE FIFTY GATES, I SUMMON
YOU! APPEAR! BRING BACK
THOSE YOU HAVE TAKEN!



HIS NERVES EXACERBATED, JIM COLLAPSED IN A DEAD FAINT! HE DOES NOT SEE THE MONSTROUS HORROR BEAR OVER HIM...

DOES NOT FEEL HIMSELF BEING LIFTED AND CARRIED...

JIM OPENS HIS EYES... TO FIND HIMSELF RECLINING IN A COFFIN... JUST AS THE BLOATING MONSTER IS SHUTTING THE HEAVY LID DOWN ON HIM!

NO... NOT DON'T... DON'T...!

WITH A THUD, THE COFFIN CLOSES!

HE'S HAMMERING ME IN... CAN HEAR THE HAMMER... HITTING THE NAILS... SUFFOCATE... IN HERE... GETTING HARDER TO BREATHE...

ALL RIGHT, PETE! THE JOKE'S GONE FAR ENOUGH! HE LOOKED HALF DEAD WITH FEAR, IN THAT COFFIN. LET'S OPEN IT UP!

SURE, RIGHT AWAY! BOY, WAS HE EVER SCARED!

JIM CURE FELL FOR ALL THAT HUMBO- JUMBO! WHERE'S?

SPEAK UP! PETE! I-I CAN'T GET IT UP! IT'S STUCK!

PETE! JIM WILL SUFFOCATE IN THERE!

BESIDES... WE TOOK A BODY OUT TO MAKE ROOM FOR HIM!

WE'VE GOT TO PUT IT BACK! COME ON BACK TO THE CAR, WE'LL GET SOME TOOLS!

YOU'RE NEXT, MISTER! AND YOU CAN REST ASSURED... I GOING TO BURY YOU... DEEP!

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YOU'RE NEXT, MISTER! AND YOU CAN REST ASSURED... I GOING TO BURY YOU... DEEP!

IT WORKED OUT PERFECTLY! ALL THOSE SCENIC EFFECTS... SMOKE AND THINGS... BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET THAT COFFIN OPEN!

PETER, HURRY!

I AM, I AM! SOOO SORRY, I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO HAPPEN TO JIM EITHER, YOU KNOW!

WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST! SOMEBODY'S LIABLE TO FIND THE DEAD BODY WE TOOK OUT OF THAT COFFIN AND CARRIED AWAY...

USUALLY, DON'T REMIND ME! MY HANDS FEEL FUNNY JUST AT THE PROSPECT OF IT!

LOOK! THE COFFIN IS GONE!

YOU DON'T SUPPOSE ANYONE WAS SUPPOSED TO *BURY* THAT COFFIN.

THIS IS HORRIBLE! JIM WILL BE *BURIED* ALIVE!

NO, NO! WE CAN STOP THAT! HURRY! WE HAVE TO FIND IT...

NOT OVER HERE!

NOBODY HERE, EITHER! WINNIE, DO YOU SEE ANYONE DIGGING A GRAVE?

NO! NO, I DON'T! BUT WE MUST FIND JIM! WE HAVE TO.

Half an hour later...

CARETAKER... DID YOU JUST... BURY A COFFIN?

DID IT? YOU HAVE TO *DIG* IT UP! THE MAN IN IT *ISN'T* DEAD!

WHAT WINNIE MEANS IS... A JOKE! YOU KNOW... YOU'VE GOT TO OPEN THAT COFFIN!

I WOULDN'T OPEN THAT COFFIN FOR ALL THE GOLD IN FORT KNOX! I BURIED HIM PLENTY DEEP! THAT MAN DIED FROM... *LEPROSY*! ANYONE WHO TOUCHED THE CORPSE WILL GET IT!



SCIENCE FICTION FANS!

FOR THE BEST IN THE NEW SCIENCE-
FANTASY FIELD...FOR A MAGAZINE JAM-
PACKED WITH ASTOUNDING, AMAZING, AND
EERIE ADVENTURES INTO THE FANTASTIC
...FOR SCIENTIFIC SUSPENSE STORIES AT
THEIR ILLUSTRATED BEST, READ...



ANOTHER
"NEW TREND"
SURE-FIRE WINNER!



ON SALE NOW
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!

BACKFIRE

Ever since she insisted on buying the dog, he had hated the big golden animal his wife brought into the house! As far back as he could remember he had been afraid of dogs, even the tiny wriggling pups he saw in the Pet Shop windows... but this monster she had brought home was huge, even for a Great Dane!

The savage hate he felt toward the dog she called Hamlet grew with each passing day... and the hate was matched by his awful fear! Fear which multiplied until the mere sight of the animal was enough to start the cold chills running down his spine! And what was most frightening of all was his realization that his hatred was returned by Hamlet! If he wasn't careful... well, the dog was tremendously powerful...

.....

It was all set... his wife would be away from the house for several hours! With meticulous care he examined the basement room he had hired up... the room with no means of escape! The metal tub in one corner was all set for the bath he was going to give the dog in a few minutes... Hamlet's last bath!

He examined the pipes leading to the tub. With the faucets removed like this, the water which was even at this moment splashing in

could be turned off only from the outside! And with the lock fixed this way, all he would have to do would be to slam the door and it would be impossible to get out! The plan couldn't fail!

He smiled to himself... he would unchain Hamlet from the post right outside and bring him into the room. With the door shut on his way out, and the water running, he would never have to worry about that animal again!

He whirled at the sound behind him, his eyes wide with terror! The door to the little room had slammed shut... and the water... there was no way to turn it off from in here!

* * * * *

Even standing on tip-toes on the edge of the tub the water reached almost to his lips! There was scarcely six inches left between the ceiling and the surface of the water! By tilting his head far back he was able to keep the air trickling in through his nostrils... but the water was rising by the second! For the hundredth time he screamed, at the top of his lungs: "H-HELP! HAMLET! HELP!"

But the only sound he could hear in response was the arrush of water... the flood that was even now beginning to surge up to his ears... into his mouth... pounding against his tightly-shut eyes!

He opened his mouth for a last scream for help... and there was the bruising impact of his head striking the cement ceiling! There was no air left in the flooded room... even the surging sound of the water had stopped! All he could hear was a thin bubbling sound... which seemed to start deep in his strangling throat...



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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Drag over that battered COFFIN, kiddies, and stretch your palpitating CORPSES on the warm-eaten lid. (Being very careful, of course, not to jar the warm-eaten contents!) ... as it's once again time for another of our GRAVE discussions! The first item on my musty old list of things to DIG UP with you is the NEW TITLE of my now familiar magazine! As you no doubt are aware, my magazine has always been tops in TERROR ... the first word in HORROR ... and unsurpassed in SUSPENSE! So when my frightened publisher first agreed to publish my tales ... which I keep here in the CRYPT ... we called the magazine THE CRYPT OF TERROR! Later, however, the old coo's ulcer has been eating up, and every time I've bandaged him, the latest issue, his seeing the word TERROR in the title has given him a bad case of hiccup! This, naturally, aggravated the old boy's tummy even more ... so for his sake, as well as for the sakes of all my readers with weak tummies, I reluctantly agreed to change the title of my TERROR-IPIC mag to TALES FROM THE CRYPT! But do not be alarmed, all you FIENDISH FANS! To paraphrase a phrase, a CORPSE by any other name is still a CORPSE! And let me assure you, THE CRYPT OF TERROR by any other name will still be ... ah ... TERROR-ABLE! Now let's dig into the MAIL MAUSOLEUM ... which is CHOKED full of your epistolary gems ... and peruse a few! (God, did I say THAT?)

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I hate to admit this, you old geezer, but your magazine is the very best HORROR-TERROR book I have ever read-burnt-nosed! I have an almost complete collection of THE CRYPT OF TERROR. However, I do not have issues No. 4, No. 9, and No. 16. I wrote to your publisher for them, and he informed me that these particular issues were sell-outs! So I am appealing to you. Please print this letter in your "corner." I will offer to pay as high as 75c apiece to anyone who can send me these issues in good condition!

Ed Beep
10 Ocean Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y.

O.K. Ed, there's your letter ... good luck! For 75c apiece, I'd send you my own personal copies ... but I've never kept them! Can't stand to have them around ... they scare the daylight out of me!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I want you to know that everytime a CRYPT OF TERROR is put on sale at my candy-store, I will buy it and will HAUNT you. You don't scare me!

A. (NMD) Ghost
(No address given!)

So haunt me, Ghost! I dare you! Only you better not show up-around the CRYPT! I might scare the SHEET off you! Go dissolve your ectoplasm in a vat of sulphuric acid!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

Your magazine leaves me cold!

The Corrupt of Slab 13
City Morgue Refrigerator
Dodge City, Kansas

Why don't you give yourself a hot-foot with an acetylene-torch!

CRYPT-KEEPER'S LITERARY SELECTIONS

A further listing of my favorite fine mystery literature, which you can obtain at your local library!

H. P. Lovecraft. Lurker-at the Threshold
Karlson, Boris. And the Darkness Falls
Eam Stoker. The Mystery of the Sea

And so, dear readers, don't forget to tell all your friends about the new title of my magazine ... I wouldn't want anyone to miss this issue because he was still looking for the CRYPT OF TERROR! And keep your letters pouring in ... tell me what type of stories you like best! Just write to: THE CRYPT-KEEPER, Rm. 708, Dept. 20, 325 Lafayette Street, N. Y. C. 12, N. Y.

R... DEATH!



PERHAPS IT WAS THE FACT THAT OUR CHILDHOOD WAS MISERABLE...OUR PARENTS BEING POVERTY-STRIKEN! PERHAPS IT WAS THE FACT THAT I, JANET BENNETT, HAD REMAINED UNMARRIED, AND HAD CONTINUED TO LIVE WITH MY BROTHER GREGORY, THEREBY INCREASING HIS RESPONSIBILITIES! WHATEVER THE REASON,GREGG HAD SHUT HIMSELF OFF FROM THE WORLD TO STUDY... TO BETTER HIMSELF...HIS LIFE...AND MINE...

GREGG! YOU MUST GET SOME SLEEP!

LEAVE ME ALONE, SIS! I'LL BE ALL RIGHT...



HIS DAYS OCCUPIED IN HIS REGULAR JOB,GREGG SAT UP HALF THE NIGHT PORING OVER TEXT BOOKS! I KNEW THAT SUCH HARD WORK...CONSTANT STUDY...WOULD HAVE ITS EFFECT! HE GREW PALE...HIS EYES CLOSED...

GREGG! YOU MUST STOP DRYING YOURSELF! YOU WILL BECOME ILL...

I AM TAKING CARE OF MYSELF, JANET! DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME!



BUT IT COULD NOT *HELP* BUT WORRY? GREGG'S CONDITION GREW PROGRESSIVELY WORSE! AT LAST I COULD RESIST NO LONGER! I BEGGED GREGG TO LET ME CALL IN OUR FAMILY DOCTOR!

ALL RIGHT? ALL RIGHT? LET THE OLD DOCT COME OVER AND EXAMINE ME IF IT WILL MAKE YOU ANY HAPPIER?

OH, YES, GREGG? YOU *HAVE* BEEN LOOKING RATHER BAD LATELY!



DR. WENTWORTH EXAMINED GREGG THOROUGHLY...AND AFTER HE HAD FINISHED, HE TOOK ME ASIDE!

THERE IS NOTHING REALLY WRONG WITH HIM, MISS BENNETT! HE IS WORKING TOO HARD! HE EATS HASTILY, READS TOO LONG...AND *FORGIES*! I WILL GIVE YOU A PRESCRIPTION WHICH OUGHT TO *HELP*!

THANK YOU, DOCTOR! I FEEL RELIEVED!



DR. WENTWORTH GAVE ME THE PRESCRIPTION, AND LEFT! GREGG INSISTED THAT THE PRESCRIPTION BE FILLED BY A CHEMIST IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, AN OLD MAN WHOSE SHOP WAS OLD TOO... OLD-FASHIONED AND DEVOID OF THE GLITTER OF THE MODERN DRUG STORE! AS I ENTERED THE SHOP...

YES, MADAM? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

I... I'D LIKE TO FILL THIS PRESCRIPTION!



THE OLD MAN TOOK THE SLIP OF PAPER IN HIS WITHERED, SONEY HANDS AND STUDIED IT FOR A MOMENT...

THIS PRESCRIPTION CONTAINS A RARE DRUG! I HOPE I HAVE SOME OF IT! IF NOT... I'LL HAVE TO ORDER IT!

WELL THEN, WILL YOU DELIVER IT WHEN YOU HAVE MADE IT UP?



THAT EVENING, THE MEDICINE ARRIVED, AND I SAW THAT GREGG TOOK IT BEFORE DINNER!

THERE? DOES IT TASTE BAD?

RATHER TASTELESS! NOT TOO BAD, SIS?



I WAS CAREFUL TO SEE THAT GREGG TOOK HIS MEDICINE BEFORE EVERY MEAL, AND THEN, ONE EVENING...

GREGG? YOU'RE NOT STUDYING

I... I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT, TONIGHT, JARET!



HE BEGAN TO PACE THE FLOOR AS IF UNDECIDED WHAT TO DO WITH HIMSELF...AND THEN...

I THINK I'LL GO OUT TONIGHT. JARET? TAKE IN A SNOW? DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME...

OH... ALL RIGHT, GREGG?



I REACHED AT LAST GREGG HAD BROKEN AWAY FOR AN EVENING OF RELAXATION? I WATCHED HIM AS HE SAUNTERED DOWN THE STREET? I DON'T KNOW WHAT TIME HE CAME IN... BUT THE NEXT MORNING, AT BREAKFAST, HIS EYES GLEAMED...

OH, GREGG? YOU LOOK SO WELL?

AND I FEEL IT, TOO! I HAD A GRAND TIME LAST NIGHT? MET SOME OLD COLLEGE CHUMS?



THAT NIGHT GREGG WENT OUT AGAIN, AND AGAIN THE NEXT NIGHT? HE WAS A CHANGED MAN... HE BECAME A LOVER OF PLEASURE... A HUNTER OF RESTAURANTS AND CRY PLACES? I WAS HAPPY AND YET... ALTHOUGH I KNEW NOT WHY... I WAS FRIGHTENED...

WHY DO YOU LOOK AT ME SO STRANGELY, SIS? WHAT DO YOU SEE?

I... I DON'T KNOW, GREGG?



THE DAYS WENT BY AND GREGG CONTINUED TO TAKE HIS MEDICINE... REVIEWING THE PRESCRIPTION FROM THE OLD CHEMIST WHEN IT RAN OUT? ONE MORNING...

GREGG? I... I... GOODBYE, LOID?

WHAT? YOU SAY SOMETHING, SIS?



HIS EYES FOLLOWED MY STARE? A FINGER... THE LITTLE FINGER OF HIS RIGHT HAND... WAS ALL WRINKLED AND WITHERED? IT LOOKED... LIKE IT WAS PUTTING AWAY...



GREGG QUICKLY WRAPPED THE FORTNITE LOOKING DISK IN HIS HANDKERCHIEF AND STAMMERED...

I... I BURNED IT... LET ME BANDAGE IT FOR YOU, GREGG?



HORROR FLOODED INTO GREGG'S EYES? HE JUMPED UP, DREW AWAY FROM MY OUTSTRETCHED HANDS...

NO? NO? I'LL DO IT UP MYSELF? LEAVE ME BE...

WHY... GREGG?



THAT NIGHT, AFTER GREGG WENT OUT, I CALLED ON WENTWORTH... BUT HE HAD GONE OUT OF TOWN? HE WOULD NOT BE BACK TILL MORNING? I SAT STARRING OUT OF THE WINDOW... AND ABOUT MID-NIGHT I WAS AWAKENED BY THE KEY IN THE LOCK...

GREGG? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR HAND?

I... I CUT IT? WHY DO YOU ASK?



I CANNOT DESCRIBE THE FEAR THAT CLEFT INTO MY HEART AS GREGG SNAPPED AT ME! THERE WAS A STRANGE LOOK IN HIS EYES! A LOOK I HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE!

I AM GOING TO MY ROOM! BRING MY BREAKFAST TRAY UP IN THE MORNING AND LEAVE IT AT THE DOOR!



THE NEXT MORNING, I FOLLOWED GREGG'S INSTRUCTIONS, LEAVING HIS TRAY! THEN I RUSHED OVER TO SEE DR. WERTWORTH.

MY DEAR! YOU SAY HE *STILL* TAKES THE STUFF!

YES! REGULARLY!



WELL, WHERE DOES HE HAVE THE PRESCRIPTION FILE OF

AT THE OLD CHEMISTS' ON BROOK STREET.



DR. WERTWORTH BOY HIS COAT AND WE HURRIED TO THE OLD-FASHION CHEMIST SHOP! THE OLD MAN GREETED US AND THE DOCTOR PROCEEDED TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS.

OH, YES! MR. BENNETT HAS BEEN IN REGULARLY TO FILL THAT PRESCRIPTION! CONTAINS A RARE DRUG WHICH I'LL HAVE TO ORDER, NOW! I ONLY HAD A LITTLE, HAD IT A LONG TIME TOO.

HEHEH! LET ME SEE THE DRUG YOU USED, SIR!



THE OLD MAN WENT INTO THE BACK AND RETURNED WITH A MUSTY CARBIDE, WHICH HE PREED OVER FOR THE DOCTOR.

PHEN! WHAT IS THIS? THIS IS NOT WHAT I PRESCRIBED! ON YES, I SEE THE LABEL IS RIGHT, BUT I TELL YOU THIS IS *NOT THE DRUG!*

I... I... I'VE HAD IT FOR SOME TIME. MAYBE A FEW YEARS! I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!



THE DOCTOR TOOK THE CARBIDE, AND WE LEFT...

DOCTOR WERTWORTH! I SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT MY BROTHER HAS BEEN TAKING FOR THE PAST MONTH OR SO.

FRANKLY, MISS BENNETT, I *DO NOT KNOW!* I SHALL HAVE IT ANALYZED BUT I HAVE A FEELING THAT THIS GOES BEYOND THE REALM OF CHEMISTRY AND MEDICAL SCIENCE!



THAT EVENING MY BROTHER GREGG DID NOT GO OUT AS USUAL! HE CAME DOWN FROM HIS ROOM AND ANNOUNCED...

I HAVE HAD MY LITTLE FLING, BUT NOW IT IS OVER! I AM GOING BACK TO MY ROOMS! I DO NOT WANT TO BE DISTURBED! I WILL REMAIN IN MY ROOM. MY MEALS WILL BE SENT UP AND LEFT OUTSIDE! IS THAT CLEAR?

YES, GREGG!



GREGG WENT BACK TO HIS ROOM, AND THE NEXT MORNING, WHEN I PLACED HIS BREAKFAST TRAY BEFORE THE DOOR...

GREGG? BREAKFAST?

LEAVE IT AND GO!



I STARTED DOWNSTAIRS, AND THEN REMEMBERED SOMETHING I WANTED FROM MY BEDROOM AS I STARTED BACK...

YOU'RE SPYING ON ME!
I DON'T WANT YOU SPYING
ON ME!

GREGG! YOUR ARMS!
THEY'RE ALL BANDAIDED



I RUSHED TO HIM, BUT HE PICKED UP HIS TRAY AND SLAMMED HIS DOOR... LOOKING IT...

OH, GREGG?... SOB... GREGG!



I WENT DOWNSTAIRS, AND CALLED THE DOCTOR...

ANY NEWS, DOCTOR?
I'VE SENT IT OFF, MISS BENNETT! IT WILL BE ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE WE KNOW!



WHEN I DID NOT SEE GREGG FOR SEVERAL DAYS, I CALLED DR. WESTWORTH AGAIN... AND TOLD HIM OF GREGG'S WRINKLED, ROTTED FINGER... HIS BANDAIDED HAND AND HIS BANDAIDED ARMS...

I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THE LABORATORY YET, MISS BENNETT, BUT I THINK I'D BETTER COME OVER...

YES... DOCTOR?



DR. WESTWORTH ARRIVED AND WENT UPSTAIRS! I HEARD HIM NOISE AND SO ON! AFTER A WHILE HE CAME DOWNSTAIRS! THERE WAS UNUTTERABLE HORROR IN HIS EYES! HE GULPED... STEADYING HIMSELF BY GRASPING THE BANISTER...

I HAVE SEEN HIM! CHOKED! I HAVE EXAMINED HIM! AND I AM IN MY SENSES! I HAVE DEALT WITH DEATH ALL MY LIFE... BUT I... NEVER... NOTHING... LIKE THIS... NO, NO!



HE COVERED HIS FACE WITH HIS HANDS AS IF TO SHUT OUT A HORRID SIGHT... AND THEN HE TURNED!

DO NOT SEND FOR ME AGAIN, MISS BENNETT! I CAN DO NOTHING IN THIS HOUSE!

BUT... DOCTOR... DOCTOR?



THE NEXT DAY, AS I WAS CROSSING THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE, I HAPPENED TO GAZE UP AT GREEN'S WINDOW.

WHA... OH-GASP!



THE BLIND WAS BEING DRAWN BACK, NOT BY A HAND, BUT A ROTTED STUMP. A BEAST'S PAW SHAPELESS HORRIBLE! AND BEHIND IT, TWO EYES OF BURNING FLAME GLARED AT ME AMIDST SOMETHING AS FORMLESS AS GHOSTLY AS THE ROTTING FAN.



I CALLED DR. WENTWORTH AS SOON AS I GOT INTO THE HOUSE...AND, ALTHOUGH AT FIRST HE REFUSED, MY FRIGHTENED TEARS FINALLY PERSUADED HIM TO COME! WE SAT DOWN IN THE SITTING ROOM...

THE CHEMIST I SENT THE DRUG TO WAS *UNABLE TO ANALYSE IT!* ITS CHEMICAL COMPOSITION WAS UNKNOWN TO HIM ALTHOUGH THE RESULTS OF TESTS SHOWED THAT IT WAS SIMILAR IN ACTION TO THE *DIGESTIVE ENZYMES* IN THE HUMAN BODY! YOUR BROTHER IS *BEING DIGESTED ALIVE!*

EEEEK!

PLEASE, DOCTOR! YOU MUST TELL ME WHAT IS WRONG WITH GREGG!

I AM AFRAID, MISS BENNETT, THAT THIS WHOLE EPISODE IS MOST UNNATURAL! THERE ARE FORCES INVOLVED HERE - SUPERNATURAL FORCES - THAT WE TODAY KNOW LITTLE ABOUT!



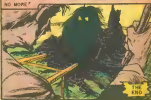
DR. WENTWORTH GRABBED HIS WALKING CANE AND HASTENED UP THE STAIRS! IMAGINE HIS ORDERS TO REMAIN IN THE SITTING ROOM. I FOLLOWED! AS HE PUNKE DOWN THE DOOR, THERE CAME FORTH A FEARFUL SCREAM... NOT A HUMAN VOICE, BUT MORE LIKE THAT OF AN ANIMAL...

THERE IT IS... IN THE CORNER...

OH, NO...



THERE UPON THE FLOOR WAS A DARK PATRID MASS... NEITHER, NEITHER LIQUID NOR SOLID. BUBBLING... AND OUT OF THE MIST OF IT SHOWN TWO BURNING POINTS, LIKE EYES! AS THE THING LURSED FOR US, DR. WENTWORTH TEARS IN HIS EYES... STRUCK AT IT WITH HIS CANE... AGAIN AND AGAIN...UNTIL IT LIVED NO MORE!



THE END

IN THE SPRING...



...A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY...



ASHLY TURNING TO THOUGHTS OF...



IMPENDING DOOM!



COULD I HAVE? WILL YOU LOOK AT THIS? WHY IN THE WORLD DID I DRAW THIS FACE? I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE I WAS DOING IT! FUNNY THE EXPRESSION IS ONE OF EXTREME... FEAR!



OH, WELL . NO USE WORRYING ABOUT IT! GOSH, IT'S A SWELL DAY! TOO NICE A DAY TO WORK! THINK I'LL TAKE A WALK!



SURE IS STRANGE! MUST HAVE BEEN DAYDREAMING! MY MIND WAS A MILLION MILES AWAY! BUT WHY, ON SUCH A LOVELY DAY, WOULD I DRAW SUCH A HORRIFIED FACE?



SOMETIME LATER...

... DOES A PERSON GOOD TO GET SOME CLEAN, FRESH AIR. . . SUNSHINE! I'VE WALKED A GOGO FIVE MILES AND I DON'T FEEL A BIT TIRED!



YES, SIR! NOTHING LIKE THE GREAT OUTDOORS! NATURE SURE IS WONDERFUL.. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ARTIST TO APPRECIATE IT! SAY... WHAT'S THAT NOISE?



SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE BANGING... OR HAMMERING ON SOMETHING! OH OVER THERE. . . A HOUSE!



HMM... ALEX KORDOVA, GRAVE-
STONES! NICE CHEERFUL
OCCUPATION! SOUNDS LIKE
THAT NOISE IS COMING FROM
AROUND IN BACK!

CLANK! CLANK!

UNIQUE
STONECUTTING
GRAVESTONES

ALEX KORDOVA
PROP.

YES, I WAS RIGHT! THERE HE IS
WORKING ON A GRAVESTONE! THESE
MUST BE SAMPLES OF HIS WORK!
NICE DESIGN!

HE'S MAKING SO MUCH NOISE, HE DOESN'T
KNOW I'M HERE! WELL, THE MAN KNOWS HIS
STUFF. HE'S GOOD! WHAT'S HE WORKING
ON NOW?

CLANK

HMM. LET'S SEE! HERE LIES
THEODORE J. WARREN! ???
WHY THAT'S MY NAME! "BORN
APRIL 25, 1922." HOLY SMOKE!
I WANT A CLOSER LOOK AT
THAT GRAVESTONE!

"BORN APRIL 25, 1922
DIED JUNE 9, 1950"

HEY!

BORN APRIL 25, 1922
DIED JUNE 9, 1950



GOOD LORD! THIS IS FANTASTIC! CALM DOWN, YOUR FACE! YOU ARE THE MAN I DREW! WHAT'S GOING ON? AM I DREAMING?

MISTER! TAKE IT EASY! WHAT'S THE MATTER?



MAYBE SO, BUT YOU HAVE MY DATE OF DEATH AS JUNE 9, 1950! THAT'S THAT'S TODAY! AND THEN THERE'S THAT PICTURE I DREW.

THERE ISN'T ANYTHING TO GET EXCITED ABOUT! I JUST PUT TODAY'S DATE BECAUSE I'M GOING TO FINISH IT TODAY! LIKE AN ARTIST DATES HIS CANVAS WHEN HE FINISHES A PAINTING!... WHAT'S THAT YOU SAID ABOUT A PICTURE?



THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN JUST COINCIDENCE! I, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS, BUT IT'S... IT'S LIKE AN OMEN OR SOMETHING!

BOSS! I'LL ADMIT IT'S GOD, ALL RIGHT! BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IN SUCH A THING AS FATE OR ANYTHING LIKE IT! SAY, COME ON IN THE HOUSE! MY WIFE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIS PICTURE!



THAT HEADSTONE! THAT'S MY NAME AND MY DATE OF BIRTH! WHAT MADE YOU PUT MY NAME AND BIRTH-DATE ON THAT THING?

YOUR NAME? HMM. THAT'S QUITE A COINCIDENCE! BUT DON'T WORRY, MISTER. THIS IS JUST A SAMPLE I'M DOING! YOU KNOW, TO SHOW PEOPLE WHAT KIND OF WORK I DO!



HERE! LOOK AT THIS! IS THIS A DRAWING OF YOU, OR ISN'T IT?

WELL, I'LL BE DARNED! SURE IS ME. ALL RIGHT! YOU DIDN'T MAKE ME LOOK ANY TOO HAPPY, DID YOU?



THE ODDEST THING JUST HAPPENED, DEAR! I WAS

TED!

WHY...? ELLEN!







NOW, SEE HERE! I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ALL I CAN TAKE

LOOK AT YOU! A MISERABLE WRETCH! YOU'LL NEVER BE ANYTHING BUT WHAT YOU ARE! A DUMB GRAVESTONE GUTTER! TED'S A SUCCESS! HE HAS MONEY! HE'S YOUNG, HANDSOME, EXCITING! YOU'RE NONE OF THOSE THINGS!



I'VE HAD ENOUGH! I'M GOING OUT TO MY WORK SHOP! THERE ARE SOME THINGS I WANT TO DO!

GO AHEAD, RUH, YOU SPINELESS SNAKELION! FOR ALL I CARE YOU CAN GO OUT AND NEVER COME BACK!



OH-H, THAT MAN! HE AGGRAVATES ME TO DEATH! I CAN'T STAND HIM ANY MORE! ESPECIALLY SINCE I'VE MET FOO AGAIN... TEDDY...

AH... ELLEN... PERHAPS IT'S BETTER LEAVE...



HO, TED... DON'T GO! ALEX WON'T BE BACK FOR HOURS! AND WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT... OLD TIMES! REMEMBER?

YES... BUT... COM, THERE'S NO USE KIDDING MYSELF. ELLEN I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN! BUT YOU'RE MARRIED.



FORGET ABOUT ALEX, NO, TED! JUST THINK OF FOO... AND ME! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME BUT YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN HAVE YOU, TED? YOU COULDN'T FORGET ME!

NO, NO, I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN! THOSE NIGHTS... YOUR KISSES...



I WAS CRAZY TO MARRY ALEX! I'VE KNOWN ALL ALONG THAT IT WAS FOO I WANTED! AND FOO WANT ME TOO! I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES! IT'S HOT TOO LATE... WE CAN STILL BE TOGETHER! KISS ME, TED! KISS ME HARD!

ELLEN, I... IT'S HOT RIGHT! YOUR MARRIAGE...



KISS ME!

I : ON, ELLEN, ELLEN



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 100-ton vessel.



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[illegible]

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of the
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1 PENNY**

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Then, if not pleased, re-
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to they look you almost
like they had them. Only 10
days. **194** **11** **194**
please, your money
back. **194** **11** **194**

194

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BOEY WHOLESALE COMPANY, Dept. 28 A-200
480 Madison Ave. New York 17, N.Y.

[illegible]

| | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|
| NAME | DATE | TIME | SCORE |
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[illegible]

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New silk-finish enlargement, ivory gold-tooled frame



IMPORTANT!—DO NOT ENCLOSE ANY MONEY
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ENLARGEMENT and Ivory Gold-Tooled Frame

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TALES FROM THE CRYPT

FEATURING...



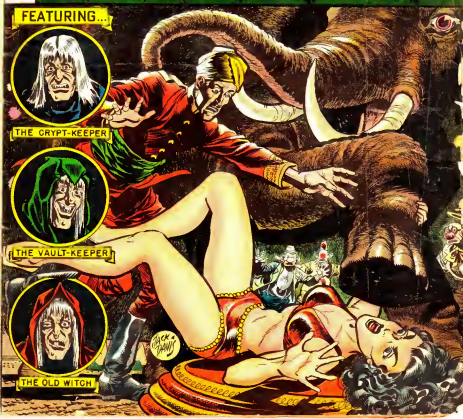
THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



**HEE, HEE! E.C.'S SCIENCE-FICTION
MAGS MUST BE PRETTY FIENDISH
TO GIVE THESE TWO GHOULS
A CHARGE! LOOK AT 'EM!**



**E.C. IS
PROUDEST
OF ITS TWO
SCIENCE-FICTION
MAGAZINES!**



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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEAR, HEAR! COME, MY FRIENDS! COME INTO THE CAFTS OF TERROR! ONCE AGAIN WE MEET FOR OUR BILVERLY
SESSION! YES, IT'S YOUR HOTT IN HORROR, THE CAFTS' KEEPER, OFFERING HIS MAG-MAG WITH A TERRORFUL
FAIR GUARANTEED TO CURE YOUR NAIR AND BRING YOU FROM BLOOD! SEVERAL ISSUES BACK, I TOLD YOU A
NAIR ABOUT A BUTCHER WHICH PROVED VERY POPULAR! ONE WHO IN EVEN SENT ME A CLEARER, WITH
COMPLETE DIRECTIONS FOR WHAT HE WANTED ME TO DO IN IT... BUT IT DIDN'T SINK IN! SO I DECIDED
TO TELL YOU ANOTHER STORY ABOUT A BUTCHER... ONE THAT I'M SURE WILL TICKLE YOUR SPARK-PLUG!
I CALL THIS MEATY LITTLE HORROR MEDDLEMAN.

AS THE ASSOCIATED COMPANY IS REGISTERED IN A MEMBER STATE OF THE EU.

**" 'TAIN'T THE MEAT...
IT'S THE HUMANITY!"**

NO ONE PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO EACH
BUSTLE BEFORE WORLD WAR II. HE WAS
JUST ANOTHER SMALL TOWN BUTCHER
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THE WAR. SADDLED
WITH THE ADVENT OF MEAT RATIONING...
RED POINTS... AND CEILING PRICES...
EACH BUSTLE BECAME VERY POPULAR

1000

[illegible]

ON LINE
PART 1



P. 14

HEH, HEH! TEP! SUDDENLIC, OL' ZACH BRITTLE FOUND HIMSELF THE MOST POPULAR MAN IN TOWN! HEH, HEH! WHY NOT? HE WAS THE ONLY BUTCHER! REMEMBER THOSE DAYS, KIDDIEST RATION BOOK? NO MARY RED POINTS FOR EACH POUND OF MEAT? NO MARY RED POINTS ALLOWED EACH PERSON TEN MONTHS! IT WAS PRETTY TUGH... THE SITUATION, THAT IS...



OH, DEAR! I ONLY HAVE FORTY-ONE POINTS LEFT, MR. BRITTLE! CAN I... ONE THEM TO YOU?



I'M ANFULLY SORRY, MRS. VISIBLE! I NEED THOSE POINTS IN ORDER TO BUY THE MEAT MYSELF! I COULDN'T DO THAT!

NO BIRDIN STEAKS, MR. BRITTLE!

SORRY, MR. FUDDY! I JUST SOLD THE LAST ONE TO MR. SUSPENSIVE! I COULDN'T YOU HAVE A FEW FORK SHOOPS?



SORRY, MISS DICKLE-SCOUR! NOTHING BUT SALAM! LEFT! I EXPECT ANOTHER SHIPMENT TOMORROW! BUT YOU'D BETTER BE ON LINE EARLY! FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED, YOU KNOW!

POOR MR. BRITTLE! HE TRIES SO HARD! AND HE'S SO HONEST!

THIS RATIONING CERTAINLY IS HARD ON HIM!



YEP! MEAT RATIONING WAS HARD ON MR. BRITTLE! THAT IS, UNTIL HE DISCOVERED AN INTERESTING FACT...

IF I COULD GET A HIDE STEAK, MR. BRITTLE, I'D... ER... PAY! WE'D... SORT OF... FORGET ABOUT THE CULLING PRICE!

BUT THAT'S DIS-HONEST, MR. VANDERCLIFF! THAT'S BLACK MARKET!



NO TELLING HOW LONG THIS WAR WILL LAST, ZACH! MIGHT AS WELL MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES! THERE ARE A FEW OF US WHO'D BE WILLING TO PAY ENOUGH TO GET WHAT WE WANT!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE... THE POOR PEOPLE, MR. VANDERCLIFF?



SUIT YOURSELF, ZACH! YOU'RE ONE OF THEM, NOW! YOU COULD BE PRETTY WELL OFF IF YOU USED YOUR HEAD! THINK IT OVER!

I... I WILL, SIR! I'LL THINK IT OVER!



ONE THOUSAND! TWO THOUSAND! OH... PARDON ME? I WAS JUST COUNTING MY LOOP FROM THE BLACK MARKET OPERATION I WAS IN DURING THE WAR! WELL, HERE! THERE WAS A SHORTAGE OF CASSETS, Y'KNOW? I DID UP AN IDEA ON HOW TO GAIN IN'TALL. I HAD TO GO WAS CLEAN OFF THE DIRT AND POLISH 'EM UP AGAIN! THEN, HERE! AS FOR MR. GRISTLE... WELL... LET'S LOOK IN ON HIS HOME LIFE!



JUNIOR! EAT YOUR MEAT!

I'M NOT HUNGRY!

SEVENTEEN POINTS!



YOU SAY SOMETHING, ZACH?

HUN? OH! NO! I WAS JUST THINKING, DEAR!



YEP! MR. GRISTLE THOUGHT IT ALL OVER! AND HE MADE UP HIS MIND...

WHY, MR. GRISTLE? THERE ISN'T A DECENT PIECE OF MEAT IN YOUR WHOLE SNOWCASE!

THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT. MRS. GRINDY! SHORTAGE, Y'KNOW!



BUT I WAITED ON LINE FOR TWO HOURS! I'M THE FIRST CUSTOMER YOU'VE HAD TODAY!

THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT. MRS. GRINDY! I'M SORRY!



BUT AT NIGHT, SHADOWNY FRIES WOULD COME TO MR. GRISTLE'S STORE...

HERE'S YOUR STEAK, MR. VANDERCLIFF! TEN POUNDS!

AND HERE'S YOUR THIRTY BUCKS, MR. GRISTLE! OH! I'VE GOT ANOTHER CUSTOMER FOR YOU! HE WANTS STEAKS, TOO!



BUT I CAN'T GET ANYMORE, MR. VANDERCLIFF! I DON'T GET ENOUGH POINTS! AS IT IS, I'M GIVING THE LEFT-OVERS TO THE FOLKS IN TOWN!

YOU COULD FIGURE SOMETHING OUT, MR. GRISTLE! THE FOLKS IN TOWN PAY POINTS FOR THEIR MEAT! WHY THEN ANY MEAT THAT YOU CAN GET WITHOUT RED POINTS?



... AND AT THE THREE-QUARTER MARKER, IT'S FATHEAD, BY A FAT HEAD! AND NOW... AT THE STRIKER... IT'S... IT'S... HOLD IT! FATHEAD JUST STUMBLED! LOOKS LIKE HE BUSTED HIS LEFT TOO BAD! NOW THEY'LL HAVE TO SHOOT HIM! AND HE WAS SUCH A GOOD HORSE, TOO! ER... MR. BRISTLE? YOU LISTENING?

JINGLE! EAT YOUR MEAT!
I'M NOT HUNGRY! NEXT TIME EXPECT ME TO EAT LIKE A HORSE!
HORSE MEAT!

YOU SAY SOMETHING, JACK?
HON? OH! NO? I WAS JUST THINKING, DEAR!



YET! MR. BRISTLE FOUND THE SOLUTION TO HIS PROBLEM! HE BEGAN BUYING HORSEMEAT, AND PASSING IT OFF TO HIS POOR CUSTOMERS AS THE REAL THING... THEREBY GETTING THOSE PRECIOUS RED-POINTS...

AND WITH THE PRECIOUS RED-POINTS, HE'D PURCHASE GOOD MEAT WHICH HE'D SELL AT THE BLACK MARKET.

WHY YOU HAVE SUCH A NICE SELECTION NOW, MR. BRISTLE!
TWO! WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE, MRS. SHRED? SOME STEAK? CHOPS?

THESE STEAKS ARE GOING TO COST YOU MORE MONEY, MR. VANDELLOY! I'M TAKING BIG CHARGES NOW! FIVE DOLLARS A POUND FROM HERE ON!
URR! DEAR! NOW, LISTEN! I NEED TWENTY POUNDS NEXT TIME! I'M HAVING A BANQUET! AND MY FRIENDS NEED TEN POUNDS! CAN YOU GET IT FOR US?



SOON, THE HORSEMEAT WASN'T ENOUGH! MR. BRISTLE HAD TO FIND OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPLY.

LOOK, BRISTLE! I'M SUPPOSED TO SELL THIS MEAT TO GOOD! IT'S TOO OLD FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION! BEEN LAYING AROUND THE WAREHOUSE TOO LONG! NOW, FOR A PRICE...

AND NO POINTS?



NO POINTS, BRISTLE!
I'LL TAKE IT! BUT, NOT A WORD, UNDERSTAND? NOT A WORD TO ANYONE!





HEH, HEH! FIRST HORSEMEAT. NOW STALE MEAT! MR. CRISTLE CERTAINLY WAS SINKING LOWER AND LOWER! BUT NO ONE SUSPECTED WHEN MR. CRISTLE WASH A FEW PEOPLE... THE POORER PEOPLE IN TOWN... WELL, SERIOUSLY ILL!



HOW'S YOUR HUSBAND TODAY, MRS. HORTON?

BETTER, THANKS! NOW, I AIN'T BEEN FEELIN' TOO GOOD!



BUT ONE NIGHT MR. CRISTLE WASN'T IN! HE'S OUT WALKING!

WELL, JUST TELL 'IM HE CAN PICK UP ANOTHER LOAD OF THE SLOP!



THE... THE WHAT?

THE STALE MEAT! THE JUNK! THE STUFF HE'S BEEN SELLIN' AS GOOD STUFF! YOU KNOW!



OH? YES! I'LL TELL HIM!

TELL 'IM I GOT SOME HORSEMEAT FOR 'IM. Toot! Bye!



HERE'S YOUR MEAT, MR. VANDERGLIFF!

THANKS, SACH!

DON'T TAKE IT, MR. VANDERGLIFF! IT'S STALE... OLD! IT MAY BE HORSEMEAT!



SARAH!

HEH, HEH! NOT THIS STUFF, MRS. CRISTLE! I PAY SIX DUCKS A POUND FOR THIS STUFF! SACH'S REGULAR CUSTOMERS GET THE JUNK!

SIX DOLLARS! BLACK MARKET!

BRIGHT KID, THIS SARAH? GUIDE WITH **HUNDREDS** FOR THE PRICE **88¢**! SIX DOLLARS TO **WANDERLUFF** BLACK MARKET! IT **FIGURES!** BUT SHE'S A **RODD** KID, MRS. BRISTLE! SHE'S **REAL** MAD...



AFTER JACK'S CUSTOMER LEAVES... YOU'RE SELLING MEAT ON THE **BLACK MARKET!** YOU KEEP OUT OF THIS, SARAH!



AND YOU'RE PASSING OFF **HORSE MEAT** AND **STALE** MEAT TO YOUR CUSTOMERS FOR **RED-POINTS!** WE'RE GOING TO **BE** **RICH**, SARAH!



I DON'T WANT THAT KIND OF MONEY! MR. BOSTON WAS **TERRIBLY** **SICK!** WAS IT FROM **FOUR** MEAT?

PROBABLY! WHO CARES? ANYWAY, I WANT THE MONEY! AFTER THE WAR I'M GOING TO **RETIRE!** I'VE SPOOKED AWAY **SIX** **GRAND** ALREADY!



YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THIS! IT'S AGAINST THE **LAW!**

HAVE! ASK OLD **SHRIMP**! HE'LL ASK ABOUT HIS **SASSY** ONE BUSINESS! FIND OUT ABOUT **FIND**'S **TIRE** **HACKETT**! EVERYBODY'S DOIN' IT! WHY SHOULDN'T I?



YET MRS. BRISTLE WAS **AWFUL** **MAD**... BUT SHE COULDN'T **TALK** JACK OUT OF IT! HE WAS **DETERMINED** TO **MAKE** HIS **FILE**... NO MATTER **HAD** **DIFFICULTY**...

...GOT A **DEAL** FOR YOU, BRISTLE! GOT SOME **TAINTED** MEAT! **REAL** **SAD!** NO ONE'LL **KNOW** IT, THOUGH! GOT A **PROCESS** THAT **COVERS** IT UP! THEY WON'T FIND OUT TILL IT'S **INSIDE** 'EM! THEY'LL FEEL **PRETTY** **SAD!**

I NEED SOME **POINTS** **QUICK!** GOT A **SIX** **ORDER** TO **FILL!** **QUAY!** I'LL TAKE IT!



SO JACK BRISTLE **BOUGHT** THE **SPOILED** MEAT AND **WENT** TO HIS **CUSTOMERS**...

MY **SISTER-IN-LAW** IS **HERE** FROM OUT OF TOWN! SHE'S **AMAZED** THAT WE CAN GET ALL THE MEAT WE WANT!

HAVE! JUST TRY TO DO MY **BEST** MRS. BRISTLE! WHAT'LL IT BE?



HEH, HEH! DON'T TURN OVER THE PAGE TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS! YOU'LL GET TO IT! IT'S COMING! THE BEGINNING OF THE END COMES TO START RIGHT NOW! EEL FLOWERS FOR MRS. ASACROMBIE! WHAT KIND? WHY LILIES... OF COURSE! DEAD, I KNOW!

DID YOU HEAR? MRS. ASACROMBIE JUST DIED! POISONED! THEY THINK HER SISTER-IN-LAW DID IT!

POISONED? THEY'RE PERFORMING AN AUTOPSY RIGHT NOW!

I HOPE WE, MRS. GABBER! IF THAT'S ALL YOU WANT, I'D LIKE TO CLOSE UP!



MR. BRISTLE BROKE MRS. GABBER OUT OF THE STORE AND LOCKED IT UP! MR. BRISTLE WAS SCARED! MR. BRISTLE WAS GOING TO HIT THE ROAD... LEAVE TOWN... TAKE IT ON THE LAM...

HOWDY, ZACH! CLOSIN' UP EARLY, AIN'T CHA? SEASID OF THE MARIAG?

MARIAG? WHAT MARIAG?



WHY, THE ONE'S GOIN' AROUND POISONIN' EVERYONE! MRS. ASACROMBIE... AND MR. SHERO... AND MR. SHERO... AND OL' MAN BRUNN! ALL DEAD! WATCH YOURSELF GOIN' HOME, ZACH!

Y-YES! WELL! GOODNIGHT, PETE!



MR. BRISTLE RAN ALL THE WAY HOME! FIRST THING HE DID WHEN HE GOT THERE WAS TAKE HIS BLACK MARKET MONEY FROM ITS HIDING PLACE! ELEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS!

PACK YOUR THINGS - SARAH? WE'RE LEAVIN' TOWN!

YOU'RE IN TROUBLE! THEY FOUND OUT! I'LL WARNER YOU NOT TO SELL HORSEMEAT.



IT'S WORSE THAN THAT, SARAH! FOUR PEOPLE ARE DEAD ALREADY! I SOLD THEM TANKED MEAT!

YOU... YOU WHAT?



I'LL BETTER, SARAH! CAN'T YOU HEAR? HE KILLED 'IM! HE SOLD 'EM POWDERED MEAT? AH! NOW IT'S SINKING INTO THAT FEMALE BRAIN! AH! THAT'S IT! GET MAG-FEET GOOD AND MAG-FEET...HER...

YOU'RE A MURDERER!

I DID IT FOR US... SARAH! FOR YOU AND ME AND... JUNIOR!

JUNIOR! HE'S EATING AT NERBIE NORTON'S HOUSE!

NORTON! SHE BOUGHT SOME OF IT!

AT THIS MOMENT, JUNIOR STAGGERED INTO THE KITCHEN! HE LOOKED A LITTLE GREEN AROUND THE EYES!

I... I FEEL SICK NOWMY! I...

JUNIOR? BABY?

DID I?

LITTLE JUNIOR COLLAPSED ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR. HE'S DEAD, EACH! DEAD!

YOU KILLED HIM, TOO... OUR SON... EH... EH... OUR SON

SARAH! PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE!

WHEN THEY UNLOCKED ZACH BRISTLE'S BUTCHER SHOP THE NEXT MORNING, THEY FOUND MRS. BRISTLE STANDING BEHIND THE COUNTER... STARING INTO SPACE! SHE WORE A BLOOD-SMEARED APRON AROUND HER NECK! BEFORE HER... IN THE MEAT SHOWCASE... ZACH BRISTLE HAD BEEN GLUMCISLY CARVED AND LAID OUT IN THE VARIOUS TRAYS...

GOOD LORD!

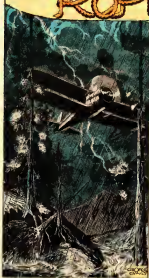
PAINTED MEAT? PAINTED MEAT ANYONE?

ALL RIGHT, SO YOU AIN'T HUNGRY? YOU CAN WINDOW SHOP, CAN'T YOU? NOT INTERESTED, EH? MAYBE YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING A FORMAL BANQUET GIVEN BY THE GHOULS, ZOMBIES, WEREWOLVES, AND VAMPIRE'S BLACK-MARKET-BOODIES SYNDICATE IN HONOR OF ZACH BRISTLE? HE WILL BE SERVED! MMM! STILL NOT INTERESTED, EH? HOW ABOUT COMING ON TO THE FAMILY-KEEPER THEM? HE'S NOT INTERESTING, TOO! GOT A BORING STORY FOR YOU? THEN I'LL DO YOU LATER WITH ANOTHER GREEPY-GREPPY-COLLECTOR'S-ITEMS.

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELL, HEN! WELCOME TO THE VAULT OF HORROR, FIENDS! YEP, IT'S YOUR HOST, THE VAULT-KEEPER, SHRIEKING! EVER HEAR OF MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS? SURE YOU HAVE! WELL, I'LL BET YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF MOUNTAIN CRAWLERS... SOUTH AMERICAN VARIETY! MY STORY CONCERNS ONE! I CALL THIS BRISTLING TALE OF TERROR...

ROPED IN!



THE DOOR TO THE WALKER-ELIM, QUICKLY, AND MORGAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY SWINGS OPEN AND THE STRANGER ENTERS! HE LOOKS AROUND AND THEN STEPS UP TO THE RECEPTION DESK...

YES, SIR? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

WILL YOU TELL MR. DONALD MORGAN TO STEP OUT HERE FOR A MOMENT? MY CREDENTIALS...



THE SECRETARY LOOKS DOWN AT THE STRANGER'S BLISTERING BADGE AND DASHES! SHE SWITCHES ON THE OFFICE INTER-COM AND WHISPERS...

MR. MORRAN! THERE'S A GENTLEMAN OUT HERE... TO SEE YOU!

HAVE HIM WAIT, MISS BALLEWINE! I'M BUSY...

HE... HE'S FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, SIR?

OH? ALL RIGHT! I'LL BE RIGHT OUT!

DONALD MORRAN COMES OUT OF HIS OFFICE...

YES? WHAT IS IT?

MR. MORRAN, YOU WERE IN COMPLETE CHARGE OF THE CONTRACT FOR THE CITY HOSPITAL, WERE YOU NOT?

I SAID! I HANDLED THE ENTIRE CONSTRUCTION JOB MYSELF! WHY?

MR. MORRAN? YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!

WHAT? BUT... BUT THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!

THERE'S NO MISTAKE, MR. MORRAN. THE UPPER FLOOR OF THE HOSPITAL COLLAPSED THIS MORNING. AN INVESTIGATION SHOWED THAT THE CONCRETE USED WAS SUB-STANDARD! ALMOST ALL SAID! BETTER COME ALONG QUICKLY!

BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I ORDERED THAT CONCRETE MYSELF! I SPECIFIED THE MIXTURE! IT WAS A GOOD MIXTURE! NO! LET ME GO! I WON'T...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

MORRAN? WHAT DOES HE WANT?

I WANT HIM FOR HOMICIDE, GENTLEMEN! YOUR PARTNER, HERE, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF TWENTY-ONE HOSPITAL PATIENTS!

WHAT? MORRAN? IS THIS TRUE?

NO! NO! THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE!



THE ONLY MISTAKE WAS THE ONE YOUR PARTNER MADE WHEN HE USED TOO LITTLE CONCRETE AND TOO MUCH SAND IN THAT HOSPITAL JOB HE HANDLED!

GOOD LORD!

MORGAN! THAT'S HOW THAT'S COULD YOU HONEST MORGAN!



ELLIS... WAGNER... BUCKLEY! BELIEVE ME! I DON'T DO THIS!...!

BETTER COME ALONG QUIETLY. MR. MORGAN! LET'S GO!

OH DEAR! OUR REPUTATION! THE SCANDAL!



AFTER MR. MORGAN MILED FROM THE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY OFFICE BY THE DETECTIVE, MR. WAGNER, THE SENIOR PARTNER OF THE CONCERN, TURNS TO THE OTHER TWO...

GENTLEMEN! I... I THINK WE SHOULD HAVE A CONSULTATION IN MY OFFICE IMMEDIATELY!

Y-YES, MR. WAGNER!

OF COURSE, MR. WAGNER!



HEY, HEY! LOOKS LIKE MR. ELLIS, MR. BUCKLEY AND MR. WAGNER ARE SHOCKED OVER THIS LATEST TURN OF EVENTS, SHARIDY! LOOK AT 'EM... CHATTERING LIKE A BUNCH OF MONKEYS! THEY SEEM NICE AND RESPECTABLE, EH. THE KIND THAT ARE APPALLED BY DISHONESTY! WELL, COME ON IN AND LISTEN! YOU'LL BE SHOCKED...



THAT'S BUCKLEY SCREAMING, NOW.

HOW DO I KNOW IT WOULD COLLAPSE? THAT MIXTURE STOOD UP IN THAT SCHOOL JOB MORGAN HANDLED LAST YEAR.

SO FAR, THAT IS!



WHAT ARE YOU COMPLAINING ABOUT, ELLIS? YOU GOT A NICE FAT CROWN OF THE DOWN WE SAVED!

I'M NOT COMPLAINING! ONLY THEY'RE ON TO US NOW!



SO WHAT? WE'VE ONLY SUBSTITUTED CHEAP MATERIALS ON MORGAN'S JOBS! HE'LL TAKE THE BAIT! HE'S TRAPPED... TRAPPED IN A WEB OF DISHONESTY! STANTAL EVIDENCE!

WE'LL JUST KEEP ACTING SHOCKED AT THIS WHOLE DEAL! THEY'LL NEVER SUSPECT US!



YEP! THAT'S THE PICTURE, KIDDER! ELLIS, BUCKLEY, AND WAGNER HAVE BEEN TAKING THE HIGH GRADE CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL ORDERED BY MORGAN ON EVERY JOB HE'S HANDLED AND SUBSTITUTING CHEAP, INFERIOR GRADE STUFF! THEN THEY'VE BEEN POCKETING THE DIFFERENCE! POOR MORGAN IS RESPONSIBLE! YES, THEY'VE SPUN A NEAT LITTLE WEB OF EVIDENCE AROUND THE INCIDENT FOURTH PARTNER! NOW THE EVIDENCE IS BEING WEIGHED! LISTEN...



GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY! HAVE YOU REACHED A VERDICT?

WE HAVE, YOUR HONOR! WE FIND THE DEFENDENT, DONALD MORGAN, GUILTY OF MANSLAUGHTER!

NO! NO!



YES, DONALD! YES! THE WEB IS TIGHT! IT'S BEEN WOVEN WELL! YOU'RE DONE FOR...

I'M INNOCENT, I TELL YOU... INNOCENT!

TAKE HIM AWAY!



AT THE OFFICES OF THE WAGNER, ELLIS, AND BUCKLEY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY...

WHY THE SUDDEN MEETING, WAGNER?

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MORGAN GENTLEMEN!



DO YOU REMEMBER THAT BOLIVIAN CONTRACT WE DID ON THE POWER PLANT AND DAM? WELL, WE GOT IT!

KNAPT! WHY THAT'S WORTH A FORTUNE! AND THERE'S ONLY THREE OF US TO SPLIT THE PROFITS NOW!



WHEN DO WE LEAVE, WAGNER?

TOMORROW! WE'RE FLYING DOWN... IN THE COMPANY'S PRIVATE PLANE!



AND SO, THE NEXT DAY, A SMALL FOUR-SEATER TAKES OFF FROM THE AIRPORT JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY... BOUND FOR LA PAZ, CAPITAL OF BOLIVIA...

POOR MORGAN! HE ALWAYS LOVED TO FLY WITH US! TOO BAD HE HAD TO MISS THIS TRIP!

HEH, HEH! YES! TOO BAD!



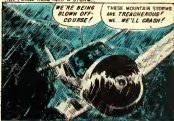
A WEEK LATER, THE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY'S PLANE IS WINNING ITS WAY SOUTH OVER THE ANDES MOUNTAINS...

NORTH OF LAKE TITICACA ON THE PERU-BOLIVIAN BORDER, THE TINY PLANE RUNS INTO A STORM.



WE OUGHT TO REACH LA PAZ BEFORE NIGHT FALL!

LOOK AT THOSE MOUNTAINS DOWN THERE! AREN'T THEY BEAUTIFUL!



WE'RE BEING BLOWN OFF-COURSE!

THESE MOUNTAIN STORMS ARE TREACHEROUS! WE... WE'LL CRASH!

THE STORM LASHES AT THE AIRPLANE, TORRONS IT LIKE A FEATHER.

THE MOUNTAIN-TOP LOOKS UP BEFORE THE PLANE! WARNER STRUGGLES WITH THE CONTROLS.

THE THREE MEN IN THE PLANE STRAIN THEIR EYES, TRYING TO PIERCE THE GATHERING CLOUDS. SUDDENLY, AS A BOLT OF LIGHTNING FLASHES...



IT'S GETTING DARK! I CAN HARDLY SEE!

LOOK-OUT! THAT MOUNTAIN-TOP!



I CAN'T GET ANY ALTITUDE! WE'LL HAVE TO TRY GOING AROUND!



WE'RE FLYING BETWEEN TWO MOUNTAINS! GET UP HIGHER! GET UP HIGHER!

I CAN'T! I CAN'T!

THE SHOCK THROWS THE THREE MEN FORWARD! FOR A MOMENT, THE TINY PLANE VIBRATES CRABLY.

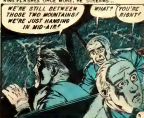
WARNER PEERS OUT OF THE WINDOW! AS THE LIGHTNING FLASHES ONCE MORE, HE SCREAMS...



WHAT HAPPENED?

WE HIT SOMETHING!

BUT... BUT WE DIDN'T CRASH!



WE'RE STILL BETWEEN THOSE TWO MOUNTAINS! WE'RE JUST HANGING IN MID-AIR!

WHAT? YOU'RE RIGHT!

SOON, THE STORM SUBSIDES! ELLIS TAKES A FLASHLIGHT AND OPENS THE PLANE DOOR...

LOOK! THE PLANE IS CAUGHT ON THESE CABLES!

BE CAREFUL! YOU'LL FALL!



ELLIS CLIMBS FROM THE TINY CRAFT... ONTO THE CABLE-LIKE STRUCTURE...

IT'S SOME SORT OF A NETWORK! I'M GOING TO CLIMB DOWN!

NO, ELLIS! WAIT TILL DAYLIGHT! YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW HIGH UP WE ARE!



BUT ELLIS DOES NOT LISTEN! HE STARTS DOWN THE CABLE NETWORK! SOON, ONLY THE GLOW OF HIS FLASHLIGHT CAN BE SEEN.

Suddenly the flashlight-GLOW FLAMES OUT, AND THE NIGHT IS FILLED WITH A BLOOD-SUNDERING SILENCE OF HORROR...

ELLIS! COME BACK! YOU CRAZY FOOL!



FROM INSIDE THEIR PLANE, WARNER AND BUCKLEY STARE INTO THE DARKNESS...

WHAT... WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM? HE MUST HAVE FALLEN!

NO! HIS SCREAM DIDN'T FASE AWAY! IT WAS CUT SHORT! HE... HE SAW SOMETHING!



AS DAWN BREAKS WHEN THE ARMS, WARNER AND BUCKLEY BEHOLD A STRANGE AND TERRIFYING SIGHT! THEIR TINY PLANE HANGS ENTWINED IN THE STRANGE CABLE-NETWORK, HALFWAY BETWEEN THE SHEER SIDES OF TWO MOUNTAINS AND HIGH OVER THE VALLEY FLOOR...

LOOK! WE CAN CLIMB TO SAFETY! IT REACHES THE MOUNTAIN SIDES.



BUCKLEY MOVES OUT OVER THE CABLE NETWORK! WARNER HANGS BACK, A SENSATION OF TERROR COILING DOWN HIS SPINE.

C'MON, WARNER! YOU CAN'T STAY THERE TILL YOU STARVE!

I... I DON'T KNOW! I... I... OH, MY LORD...



THE GIANT Hairy THING DARTS DOWN THE NETWORK FROM BEYOND THE MOUNTAIN RIDGE! ITS EIGHT HUGE SPINY LEGS CARRY IT AT A BREATHTAKING SPEED! WARNER SCREAMS...

BUCKLY! LOOK OUT! IT'S A GIANT SPIDER!

AAAAAAEEEE!



WARNER SCAMPERS BACK INTO THE TRAPPED PLANE AND SLAMS THE DOOR! FROM A WINDOW HE WATCHES AS THE GIANT CRAWLING THING REACHES BUCKLY.

OH, LORD! IT'S DEVOURING HIM!



BUCKLY'S HYSTERICAL SHRIERS OF PAIN FINALLY SUBSIDE! THE HUGE SPIDER TURNS AND MOVES TOWARD THE PLANE...

NOW...NOW, IT...IT'S COMING TO GET ME!



THE GIANT SPIDER CROUCHES OVER THE TINY PLANE...WAITING FOR ITS TERRIFIED OCCUPANT TO EMERGE! IT WAITS PATIENTLY...HOURS AFTER HOUR...

I...I'M TRAPPED! TRAPPED! IT'S JUST SITTING THERE...WAITING FOR ME...



BACK IN THE UNITED STATES, THE WARDEN AND THE DOCTOR STARE DOWN AT DONALD MORGAN! HE SITS IN THE CORNER OF HIS CELL...MUTTERING...

WHILE HIGH IN THE ANDES, MORGAN'S EX-BUSINESS ASSOCIATE IS SUFFERING THE SAME FATE! HE, TOO, IS OUT OF HIS MIND...

HE'S BEYOND HOPE, WARDEN! A COMPLETE MENTAL BREAKDOWN!

STIR CRAZY!



TH...TH...TH... SPIDER...EH... WAITING...EH... FOR ME...OF...EH...



REN, REN? YEP! SO AFTER WARNER, ELLIS AND BUCKLY TRAPPED MORGAN IN A WEB OF EVIDENCE, THEY WERE TRAPPED IN ONE THEMSELVES...A REAL WEB. THAT IS! I SUPPOSE YOU'RE WONDERING IF A SPIDER LIKE THAT REALLY EXISTS? WELL, NEXT TIME YOU SEE A LOCAL SPIDER, ASK IT IF IT EVER HEARD OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN MOUNTAIN CRAWLER! IT'LL PROBABLY GOOL UP AND DIE AT THE MERE MENTION OF ITS NAME! 'BYE, NOW!



E.C. FANS!

**UNDOUBTEDLY THE ZANZIEST
10¢ WORTH OF IDIOTIC
NONSENSE YOU COULD EVER
HOPE TO BUY! TRY IT...
JUST FOR LAUGHS!**



**ANOTHER
"NEW TREND"
SURE-FIRE WINNER!**



**ON SALE NOW
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!**



CURSE!



Ramsay squeezed the trigger and felt the pistol buck violently in his hand. The young native guide in front of him spun around and crashed headlong into the heavy foliage.

"I don't need him any longer," Ramsay muttered as he slipped his gun back into its holster and stepped around the body sprawled beside the crude trail. "Now that he's revealed the hiding place of his people's treasure, I can go the rest of the way myself. As soon as I crack open the tomb where these superstitious savages buried their loot, a fortune in diamonds and rubies is mine!"

3 hours later... 3 grueling hours of incessant hacking through the matted underbrush... Ramsay staggered into a grassy clearing. Before him, rising grey and ominous as the guide had predicted, towered the mountain where the treasure of Molokko Island was hidden. A half-million dollars, intended as a sacrifice to primitive gods, was sealed up in these rocks!

The fatigue of the long trek from the coast... the painful lunging over razor-backed ridges and through evilly-sucking swamps... was forgotten by Ramsay in that moment of ecstasy. Here... somewhere along the base of this craggy mountain... was the secret entrance to a sacrificial chamber which housed a king's ransom!

The sun had begun fading when Ramsay found the cryptic designs carved into the stone. A warning, the

guide had whispered, that doom awaited anyone who dared invade the sanctity of the mountain! The only one who's perished because of that foul curse, Ramsey sneered, was the guide, himself!

In a few minutes he had jammed a dozen sticks of dynamite into fissures beside the sealed entrance. From a distance, protected by a huge boulder, Ramsey heard the shattering blast and saw tons of rock shower in every direction. When the dust had settled he raced toward the gaping hole now revealed in the mountain's side... even from this distance he could see the glimmer of precious stones within the tomb. It was all his...

A deep rumble made him stop in his tracks. The ground began to tremble wildly... far above, the mountaintop was disintegrating before his eyes! Flames leaped madly toward the clouds... hissing black lava gushed torrentially down upon him...

Before Ramsey, in his terror, could see across the grassy clearing, the searing liquid was upon him. Like fiery tar it bubbled around his legs, searing the tortured skin and tearing it loose in raw shreds. Pain stabbed instantly through his body, from head to toe... he felt stifling heat filling his organized lungs, choking his breath in his throat.

The treasure... a thought flickered through his brain as he felt himself dissolving in that blanketing sea of molten lava... buried in the side of a VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN! Dynamite... activated it...

The scorching lava rolled on, and in its midst Ramsey's body turned molten hot... simmered and split like meat boiled in a blast-furnace...



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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

So, now you know! So maybe my two idiot editors won't be commiserating large portions of my column any more to make some ridiculous announcement about E.C.'s latest money grubbing effort! A couple of pages back, you probably saw the cover of the first issue of the most recent addition to the E.C. trash heap! MAD, they call it! You'd be MAD if you BOUGHT it! Of all the maddening things, this new mag is actually FUNNY... eh...! How disgusting can one get? When I reluctantly agreed to be myself up with this massable outfit, and allowed my Tales from the Crypt to be published in the form of comic magazines, I never in my gorilla days dreamed that I would be in any way associated with funny-type magazines! Imagine a "comic" being COMIC! (That C.K. There's a HORROR story in "MAD"? —ed.) Who sells it? Does Y.K. sell it? Does O.W. sell it? DO I TELL IT? WHO TELLS IT? (Harvey Kattman tells it! —ed.) THERE! THAT'S WHAT I MEAN! What does that WAR MONGER know about HORROR? Where does POW, K.A. BLAMM, WHOGGH Kattman come off writing horror stories! (But this is different, C.K. This is a FUNNY horror story! Why, we nearly died! —ed.) NEARLY, eh? Die the hell! And anyway, who ever heard of a FUNNY HORROR story! (But C.K. Your boy, Jack Davis, does it! —ed.) THERE! THAT'S WHAT I MEAN! What does... WHO? (Jack Davis —ed.) JACK... eh... DAVIS! MY son, BOY? (There, there, C.K. No more! —ed.) How... how could he do this to me! (Sample! We offered him MONEY! —ed.) RUINING HIM... THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE DOING... RUINING HIM! DEAD BODIES AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH? PICKLED WEREWOLF KNUCKLES AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH? VAMPIRE GHOUFLASH (HUNGARIAN STYLE) ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH? You have to spell him with MONEY! (You do however your way... we'll do however our way! —ed.) I QUIT! (Now, now! The CONTRACT! Remember? —ed.) Hm...! (That's better! Now go on with your column! —ed.) Ah, yes! The column! Well, let's look at some mail!

Dear Crypt Keeper,

I suppose by now you've discovered the mistake you made in Tales from the Crypt No. 30, and have received hundreds of corrective letters. But to one you haven't, you said that the gold miners sailed around the Cape of Good Hope which is in Africa, when you obviously meant Cape Horn in South America.

E. Kewenagh
N. Bergen, N.J.

In your last story, I found a big mistake. It said, "...water hungry citizens'd taken chopper ships, round the Cape of Good Hope in' boats..." Of course the fact that the Cape of Good Hope is in Africa shouldn't matter much except that they would

have landed in India. Most of them didn't go around Cape Horn anyway! They went to the leftmost of Panama, crossed on foot to the other side, and got a boat which was waiting for them.

James Hayden
Yonkers, N.Y.

In "Ghastly Promises" you wrote that the gold miners went around the Cape of Good Hope. This facility seems possible since and Cape is at the northern tip of Africa. Was this a mistake or a geographical error?

Daniel A.V. Vandrab
Dubuque, Iowa

All right, already! So I wrote a mistake! So what's it about? I should have geographic! Besides, my idea editors should have caught the mistake! (Is W.B. should know geography? —ed.) (I know geography! —Harvey Kattman) WAR MONGER!

Dear Crypt Keeper,

Probably you didn't think your horror stories would strike long readers across the Atlantic to your chambers. I'd be sure here in England they take the opportunity to say that yours are the best horror, and never want to ever read. Let's hope that your little embassies of horror (your magazines) keep coming to you! (then please) stay over here, if only to keep me entertained!

Alan Corwell
London, England

Hiway! We eat in bloody cocken, by love, and all that sort of real. It's been badly waving from you, Al, old boy!

Dear Crypt Keeper,

Your stories are the most amazing, the most repulsive, the most disgusting stories I have ever read. When I read your magazine I get sick to my stomach. I'm not alone in this opinion. All my friends think the same thing. Keep up the good work.

Wesley Gilman
Worcester, Conn.

My friends think so too, Matt!

Dear C.K.,

I would be most pleased if you would send me the set of photographs I've devoted to and it is, and that's the good. Let me know. Enclosed is the postal fee required. Gratefully

Edwin Hammarley
San Francisco, Cal.

For any of you other grateful readers who are looking for a way out, be advised that first by seven autographed photograph reproductions of Y.K., O.W., and myself are still available... and will be for some time! So there's no rush! Mail your quarter or complete five hundred copies of Tales of Terror looking around you. Likewise two hard Subscriptions... full year... six months... six months... 75¢. In case of the reader to who wish to buy Special complements, complements, please order, I, of T, orders, subscriptions orders, and other orders (make sure on file) 100.

The Crypt Keeper
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READ OF THE STARK HORROR
TWO MEN FOUND IN A GAME OF
**CUTTING
CARDS!**



THIS STORY IS PROBABLY THE MOST HORRIBLE, BLOOD-CURDLING TALE YOU WILL EVER READ! IT CONCERNS TWO PROFESSIONAL GAMBLERS... BUZ FORNEY AND LOU O'GRADY! GAMBLERS... BIG-TIME GAMBLERS LIKE BUZ AND LOU... ARE IN A CLASS BY THEMSELVES! GAMBLING IS THEIR LIFE! THE WAGER THE BET... IS THEIR BLOOD! BUT BUZ FORNEY AND LOU O'GRADY HATED EACH OTHER LIKE POISON...

THERE ISN'T ENOUGH ROOM IN THIS TOWN FOR BOTH OF US, LOU!

I'M NOT LEAVING, BUZ! SO, GOOD-BYE... GET ON YOUR HORSE...



I MEAN THERE ISN'T ENOUGH ROOM IN THIS WHOLE WORLD FOR BOTH OF US, LOU! AND I'M WILLING TO GAMBLE TO SEE WHO LEAVES IT!

YOU'RE PLUFFING, BUZ! CARRY! YOU'RE ON! SHALL WE DRAW? HIGH CARD HAND! THE LOSER DIES! THE CHOICE OF METHOD IS HIS!





GUS STARED DOWN AT THE CARDS FANNED OUT BEFORE HIM! THE ODDS WERE SIXTEEN TO ONE AGAINST HIS PICKING ONE OF THE THREE REMAINING AGES! HE SPUN A CARD OVER...



GUS TOOK HIS REVOLVER FROM THE DRAWER AND REMOVED ALL BUT ONE BULLET FROM ITS SIX CHAMBERS...



LOU TOOK THE SIX-SHOT REVOLVER AND TWIRLED THE CHAMBER...



GUS TOOK THE REVOLVER! HE LIFTED THE BARREL TO HIS TEMPLE! THE ODDS WERE FIVE TO ONE...





GUS HANDED THE GUN TO LOU! LOU PLACED THE MUZZLE AGAINST HIS HEAD! ODDS NOW... FOUR TO ONE



GUS TOOK THE GUN! BEADS OF PERSPIRATION BEGAN TO POP OUT ON THE TWO GAMBLERS' FACES! GUS POINTED THE REVOLVER! ODDS... THREE TO ONE...



LOU TOOK THE GUN! THERE WERE THREE SHOTS LEFT NOW! ONE OF THEM HAD THAT BULLET! ODDS... TWO TO ONE...



LOU SMILED IN RELIEF AND MOVED HIS BROW! GUS'S HAND SHOOK A LITTLE AS HE RAISED THE GUN! HE HESITATED! IT WAS EVEN MONEY NOW! HIS FINGER TWITCHED... THEN CLOSED...



GUS GRINNED! LOU STARED AT THE GUN! THE ODDS HAD RUN OUT! THE BULLET WAS LEFT! GUS HANDED THE WEAPON OVER...

HEH, HEH! TOO BAD, LOU! SHORE?



LOW LIFTED THE GUN AND STEELER HIMSELF FOR THE DEATH BLOW AS THE BULLET CAME CRASHING INTO HIS BRAIN! HE SQUEEZED THE TRIGGER...



WHAT?
IT... IT
DIDN'T GO
OFF!

A... A DUD? WHY, YOU DIRTY... YOU KNEW IT ALL THE TIME! THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED TO GO FIRST! YOU THOUGHT I'D DRAW!



DON'T BE AN IDIOT, LOW! YOU TWIRLED THE CHAMBER! NOW DID I KNOW IT WOULD COME UP LAST?

YOU CAN'T TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS ONE, GUD! NO MATTER WHEN IT CAME UP, YOU HAD A **SURE THING!**



ARE YOU ACCUSING ME... GUD FORNEY OF CHEATING?

YOU CAN HEAR! LUCKY I'M AN HONEST GAMBLER WHO'S NEVER HAD TO GO OUT! BUT I NEVER WELSH WHEN I LOSE!



OKAY, GUDS! IF YOU'RE SUCH A BIG-SHOT GAMBLER... THEN YOU'LL ACCEPT MY CHALLENGE!

YOU BEEN NAME IT?



NOBODY CALLS GUD FORNEY A CHEAT! GUDS... I CHALLENGE YOU TO A GAME OF **CHOP-POKER!**

OKAY, YOU DRUM! YOU'RE ON!



TO A FINISH! CALL YOUR DOCTOR! I'LL GET MINE!



THEN, FIELDS, BEGAN THE MOST HORRIBLE CARD GAME IN THE HISTORY OF MODERN GAMBLING! YOU'VE HEARD OF STRIP POKER? WELL... CHOP POKER IS ALMOST LIKE THAT! ONLY INSTEAD OF LOSING AN ARTICLE OF CLOTHING... YOU LOSE A **LIFE!** CHOP POKER HAD BEEN PLAYED BEFORE... IT WAS TOLD... BUT ONLY **ONCE!** AND AT A TIME? NEVER... TO A **FINISH!**



THEY SAT AT THE GREEN FELT-COVERED TABLE BENEATH THE GLARING LAMP! THE HEAT CLEAVER SPARKLED BETWEEN THEM! GUS DEALT THE CARDS...



LOU PICKED UP THE CLEAVER AND STOOD OVER GUS...



GUS STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND! HIS PERSONAL DOCTOR MOVED FORWARD INTO THE LIGHT! LOU RAISED THE CLEAVER AND BROUGHT IT DOWN...



IT WAS LIKE A PRISONER DUEL! THE DOCTORS WERE THE SECOND! TIME WAS TAKEN OUT WHILE GUS'S SECOND SERVICED HIM! THE BARBARE WAS BLOTTED RED WHEN THEY BEGAN AGAIN...



GUS PICKED UP THE CLEAVER IN HIS GOOD HAND!
LOU'S SECOND MOVED INTO THE LAMPLIGHT—



WHICH ONE, LOU?

THE... THE
FOUR... GUS!

AGAIN TIME WAS TAKEN OUT WHILE LOU'S SECOND
SERVICED HIM! SOON, THE CARDS WERE SHUFFLED
ONCE MORE...



LET'S GO, GUS!
YOU DEAL!

OK, IN,
LOU!

LOU STRETCHED OUT HIS LEFT HAND! GUS TOOK
CAREFUL AIM...



DUUUUUUUUUH!

THUNK!

HEH, HEH! YEP, KIDDIES! THAT'S HOW THE GAME WAS
PLAYED! IT CONTINUED ON LIKE THAT... FAR INTO
THE NIGHT! AS EACH HAND WAS PLAYED AND WON...



OOOOOOOOO!

ZUNG!

BUT LOU AND GUS NEVER DID
PLAY CHOP FORTER TO A
FINISH! OH, YEA! THEY PLAYED
ALL NIGHT AND INTO THE NEXT
DAY! BUT THEY HAD TO QUIT
TOMORROW EVENING! SEEMS THAT
NEITHER OF THEM COULD
DEAL THE CARDS!



WHAT? YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME? WELL, LET'S LOOK IN ON THIS
HOSPITAL ROOM! LOU AND GUS ARE IN THERE... STILL GAMBLING...



GO AHEAD! IT'S
FOUR MONEY!

SO PASS THE CHEWING GUM!
I WANT TO JUMP YOU!

THE
END

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

PEANUTS, POPCORN... HEH, HEH! YEP, IT'S YOUR FEEDER OF FOUL FABLES... THE OLD WITCH... COOKIN' AGAIN! GOT A CIRCUS RECIPE FOR YOU THIS TIME! ELEPHANT STEAK BARRISHED WITH CRUSHED TAP-BARK! I GOT THE IDEA FROM THE STORY I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU! I CALL THIS BARBLED BRABBLING OF BORE...

SQUASH... ANYONE?

FOR A MOMENT, THE CROWD UNDER THE BIG TOP WAS DEATHLY SILENT! THEN, FROM THE BARRICADE, A DRUM BEGAN TO ROLL... ITS SHRILLING STACCATO OF ANTICIPATION GROWING LOUDER AND LOUDER! IN THE CENTER OF THE RING, THE HARE ELEPHANT LIFTED A MASSIVE "POWELL" THE BOASTFULLY GLAD WOMAN BEQUEATHED ON THE TANGAREE FLOOR! THE ELEPHANT TRAINER MARKED ORDERS! THE RINGMASTER ANNOUNCED...

AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FOR THE MOST DEATH-DEFYING FEAT EVER PRESENTED UNDER THE BIG TOP...



THE WOMAN WHISPERED UNDER THE MAMMOTH UPRAISED FOOT OF THE ELEPHANT! THE TRAINER SHOUTED ABOVE THE DRUM-ROLL'S RISING CROSCENDO! THE ELEPHANT THUMPED, CURLING ITS TRUNK...



EIGHT THOUSAND POUNDS... LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! ONE SLIP... AND IT MEANS CERTAIN DEATH! WATCH.

THE GIRL STARED UP AT THE HUGE HOOF! IT WAS DIRECTLY OVER HER FACE! THE TRAINER BARKED AN ORDER! THE SOLIATH LOWERED ITS UPRAISED FORELEGS! THE DRUM-ROLL THICKENED...



THE ELEPHANT HOOF TOUCHED THE WOMAN'S NOSE! A CRYAL CRASHED.



THE TRAINER AND THE GIRL BOWED AGAIN AND AGAIN! THE CROWD CHEERED...



THE ELEPHANT ACT WAS OVER! THE CIRCUS BAND STRUCK UP A HAPPY MARCH, AND THE CLOWNS SWEEP OUT ACROSS THE ARENA! THE TRAINER AND THE GIRL DISAPPEARED THROUGH THE EXIT-WAY...

MAMA WAS GOOD! I HAVE TONIGHT, WILD! HER TRAINED HER FOOT WAS STEADY! WELL, RENÉ! DIDN'T YOU THINK THEY APPALLED MORE THAN USUAL, TO-NIGHT?



THE COUPLE MOVED ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS TO A TRAILER! THE LETTERS PAINTED UPON IT WERE BIG AND IMPRESSIVE! 'WILD WORLD'S GREATEST ELEPHANT TRAINER!'



NOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO RIDE INTO TOWN TONIGHT, WILD?

NOT TONIGHT, RENÉ! I'M TIRED.

THE INSIDE OF THE TRAILER WAS CROWDED AND MESSY! COLORFUL COSTUMES LAY STREWN ABOUT! BOOKS AND MAGAZINES SPRAWLED ON EVERY AVAILABLE SURFACE...



NOT TONIGHT! NOT TONIGHT! THAT'S ALL I HEAR! WELL, I'M NOT STAYING AROUND RIGHT AFTER NIGHT... NOT IN THIS DUMP!

I'M NOT STOPPING YOU FROM GOING INTO TOWN, RENÉ!

THE WOMAN SLIPPED OUT OF HER COUNTY COSTUME AND INTO A STREET-DRESS.

A NEED OF A MARRIAGE
DIDN'T I WANT AS WELL
HE MARRIED TO YOUR
ELEPHANT?

THEN
GIVANCE
NE,
RENÉ!

OH, NO! NOT THAT
EASY, BIG BOY!
YOU'RE STUCK
WITH ME! I'D
NEVER GIVE
YOU A DIVORCE
WITHOUT A FIGHT!
IT'S COST YOU
PLENTY...

OH, RENÉ!
DEAF!
WE'VE BEEN
ALL THROUGH
THIS BEFORE!

RENÉ SLAMMED THE DOOR OF
THE TRAILER IN ANGER AS SHE
LEFT FROM BEYOND, IN THE
SHADOWS, A FIGURE WATCHED HER
ENTER THE CAR...

AS SOON AS RENÉ'D DRIVEN OFF, THE FIGURE
MOVED OUT OF THE SHADOWS! IT WAS A WOMAN!
SHE BARTERED TOWARD MILD'S TRAILER.

LEETA! DARLING!

OH, MILD!

THEY CLUNG TO EACH OTHER FOR A FEW MOMENTS!
THEM.

DID YOU TELL
HER ABOUT ME?

NO! IT'S NO USE! SHE'S NEVER
GIVE ME A DIVORCE! I KNOW!
WE'LL HAVE TO RUN AWAY!

LEETA LOOKED AT MILD! A FLASH OF EVIL GLISTENED
IN HER TEMPERAMENTOUS EYES.

WHAT! WHAT IF THERE
WERE A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT?
WHAT IF NAME WERE KILLED?

LEETA!
WHAT ARE YOU
SAYING?

EMMA COULD SLIP, MY
DARLING! DON'T YOU SEE
HOW EASY IT COULD BE?

NO! EMMA
WOULD NOT SLIP!
SHE'S WELL
TRAINED! SHE
WOULD NOT PUT
HER FOOT DOWN
UNTIL I SIGNALLED
HER.



AND IF YOU DID
SIGNAL HER?

IT... IT WOULD
BE MURDER...
LEETA!



EXACTLY, MY
DARLING! AND NO
ONE WOULD EVER
KNOW! YOU COULD
ACT SHOCKED...
BLAME IT ON EMMA...
CLAIM THAT SHE
DISOBEYED YOU...

I'D HAVE TO
HAVE HER
SHOT!



YOU COULD TRAIN
ANOTHER, MY DARLING!
NEW WIFE... NEW
ELEPHANT... A
WHOLE NEW LIFE
FOR YOU...

I... I
DON'T
KNOW! I
JUST
DON'T
KNOW...



LEETA'S EYES BURNED! HER FACE DARKENED...

IT'S THAT, ON ME, MILO? I'M NOT
CUT OUT FOR THIS... THIS SECRET
MEETING NONSENSE? I WANT
YOU... ALL THE TIME... OR
NOT AT ALL?

GIVE ME A
CHANCE TO THINK
IT OVER, LEETA!
PLEASE!



LEETA SMILED! SHE PURSED HER LIPS... RUNNING
HER HAND THROUGH MILO'S HAIR...

OF COURSE, MY DARLING! TILL
TOMORROW NIGHT'S PERFORM...
AND... IF IT DOESN'T HAPPEN
THEN...

LEETA
BABY...



THE NEXT EVENING, MILO AND RENE STOOD IN THE
ENTRANCE WAS TO THE BIG TOP, AWAITING THEIR
CUE. MUSIC, EMMA TRUMPETED SOFTLY. SHE SEEMED
TO SENSE THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG.

THERE, THERE, GIRL! EMMA
SEEMS NERVOUS TONIGHT,
MILO?

SHE'S ALL RIGHT...
C'MON! THERE'S OUR
CUE!



THE FANFARE SILENCED THE CROWD! THE RING-
MASTER INTRODUCED THE ACT AS THE SPOT-LIGHT
SHINE TO THE BOWING PERFORMERS...

AND NOW... MILO, THE GREATEST ELEPHANT
TRAINER IN THE WORLD... AND HIS WONDER-
ELEPHANT, EMMA, ASSIGNED BY THAT DEATH-
DEFYING BEAUTY... RENE...

THE DRUM BEGAN ITS ANXIOUS ROLL ONCE MORE! WILD BARRIED AN ORDER AND EMMA LIFTED HER FOOT! REAR HOT DOWN ON THE RING-FLOOR AND BRISTLED BELOW IT...



THE THUNDER OF THE ROLLING DRUM GREW LOUDER AND LOUDER! EMMA'S HOOF HUNG MENACINGLY ABOVE RENE'S WHITE FACE! WILD BARRIED AN ORDER AND THE HUGE FOOT LOWERED SLOWLY...



FOR A MOMENT, EMMA'S GIANTIC HOOF TOUCHED RENE'S WHITE FACE! THE DRUM ROLL REACHED ITS CRESSENDO...



AS THE CROWD CHARGED, WILD SHOUTED AT EMMA! RENE SCREAMED!



THE SCREAM CAME TOO LATE! EMMA WAS WELL-TRAINED AND RESPONDED IMMEDIATELY! WILD WATCHED IN HORROR AS EIGHT THOUSAND FORMS DESCENDED ON RENE'S FEAR-TWISTED FACE.



EMMA TRAMPETED LOUDLY! SHE VEERED UP... CRUTCHES! FOR A MOMENT, THE STERRED AUDIENCE WAS SHOOKED BY THE VERY SOUND! THEN SOMEONE WHISPERED... PANDEMONIUM BROKE LOOSE! WILD HOLLED HORRIBLY



TWO GUARDS RUSHED FORWARD! THEY FIRED AT THE RED-EYED PANDYBORN. SMYTTING THEIR GUNS INTO HER TIGHT HAIR! THE CROWD SCREAMED AND SHOUTED, AS IT HUNG FOR THE PRIZE...



EMMA SWAYED AND TOPPLED OVER ON HER SIDE. DEAD! THE CIRCUS BAND BLARED IN DISCORD, ATTEMPTING TO RESTORE ORDER! THE RING-MASTER RUSHED TO WILD AS HE STARED DOWN AT RENE'S CRUSHED REMAINS IN UTTER REVOLUTION...

DON'T...DON'T LOOK AT HER, MILD! IT...IT'S HORRIBLE!

RENE! SOB, RENE!



THEY LED MILD TO THE EXIT-WAY HE WAS SOBING SOFTLY! BUT THAT NIGHT... FAR FROM THE CIRCUS GROUNDS...HE AND LETA LAUGHED TOGETHER...

IT WAS SO SIMPLE, DARLING! SO SIMPLE!

I TOLD YOU, MILD! I TOLD YOU IT WOULD BE!



WILD WAS FREE NOW... FREE OF RENE FOREVER! HE AND LETA MADE PLANS...

WE'LL WAIT A FEW MONTHS...JUST TO MAKE IT LOOK GOOD... AND THEN WE'LL BE MARRIED!

AND I'LL BEGIN TRAINING ANOTHER ELEPHANT!



FROM NOW ON, IT'S SMOOTH SAILING FOR US, MILD!

O'WINE, BABY!



IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR WILD TO TRAIN A NEW ELEPHANT! TO TAKE EMMA'S PLACE! WITHIN A YEAR THE ACT WAS AGAIN THRILLING AUDIENCES...

...MILD...WITH HIS WONDER-ELEPHANT, BESSIE, ASSISTED BY THAT DEATH-DEFYING BEAUTY...LETA!



THE CIRCUS RETURNED TO THE TOWNS WHERE THE HORRIBLE 'ACCIDENT' HAD HAPPENED ONE YEAR PREVIOUSLY! THE NIGHT OF THE OPENING PERFORMANCE, WILD AND LETA STOOD BESIDE BESSIE, AWAITING THEIR CUE...

I'LL BE GLAD WHEN THIS WEEK IS OVER AND THEN WE LEAVE THIS BIRD! ABOUT HERE! AND EMMA... DARLING!



THE OLD PANSARE BLARED! THE SPOT-LIGHT DROVE TO THE ENTRANCE-WAY TO PICK THEM UP! A DISTANT SHRILL TRUMPETING SOUNDED.

STEADY, BESSIE, BABY!

GASP! THAT WASN'T BESSIE, WILD! I... I...



THE LOW RUMBLING THAT BECAME INTO THE NIGHT DID NOT COME FROM THE SAND-STATUE A COLUMN DARTED ACROSS THE ARMS, DISCOMFING.

I SAW THEM... MILD?
I SAW THEM! WHAT
OF ITS



IT BURST THROUGH THE EXIT-WAY ACROSS THE TARNARK FLOOR! IT TRUMPETED SHRELLY! THE STENCH FILLED THE BIG-TOPT! ITS ROILING HIDE FELL AWAY IN SLURRY GLOBS AS IT MOVED! HERE AND THERE, WHITERED BONES PROTRUDED THROUGH ITS MASSIVE COVERED FLESH! PERCHED ON THE REMAINS OF ITS HEAD SAT THE DECAYED FIGURE OF A WOMAN, URRING IT ON...

EMMA...AND RENÉ!



IT LUMBERED TOWARD THE HORRIFIED TANNER AND HIS NEW WIFE. THE THING, ITS HEAD POINTING WILDLY...



IT WAS TOO LATE FOR MILD TO MOVE... TOO LATE TO RUN! THE THING WAS UPON HIM... LIFTING HIM IN ITS PAUL-SWELLING, DECOMPOSING THUMB! LEEA WAS CAUGHT BENEATH ONE OF ITS HUGE ROTTED HOOF.

EEEEEEEEEE... AAAAAAAA...



MILD WAS FLUNG TO THE FAR-BARR WITH THE FORCE OF A TWENTY-STORY FALL! LEEA WAS CRUSHED FLAT.



THEN, AS THE SCREAMS SUBSIDED AND DEATH CAME TO MILD AND LEEA, THE HUGE THING AND THE HUMAN-THING UPON IT SEEMED TO JUST FALL AWAY INTO A PILE OF PUTRESCENT SLIME.



PEANUTS, POPCORN, PUTRESCENT SLIME! HEY, LADY! BUY YER BRAT A BAG OF PUTRESCENT SLIME! HEE HEE! YEP! THAT'S M'WALE, RIDGES! RENÉ AND EMMA GOT THEIR REVENGE, AND MILD AND LEEA GOT DIEDIES TOO! BY THE WAY I'M SELLING COTTON-CANDY! GOT A WHOLE FRANK-FULL! REEHEE! WHAT ROTTEN-TASTING STUFF! BYE, NOW WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT-KEEPER'S MAG. THE MOULDS OF HORROR!



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NO. 36
JUNE-JULY



TALES



10¢

FROM THE

CRYPT

®

FEATURING



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER

IN THIS ISSUE

E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY

RAY BRADBURY

AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!



THE



"ARTIST OF THE ISSUE"

• GEORGE EVANS



Latest permanent addition to the E.C. family, George R. Evans was born Feb. 3, 1920, in Harwood, Pa., of English and Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry. When George was nine, his family moved to Kulpmont, Pa., a coal-mining town. George's early art training came at fifteen from a correspondence course, which he paid for by working as a store clerk, coal-trucker, and mill hand. He also attended the Scranton Art School for one year. At 16, he had already started to sell illustrations to airplane pulp magazines, supplementing his income by sign-painting. Came the war, and George spent three years in the AAF, where, by diligence, application, and K.P., he rose to the grade of Plc. Decorations: one (1) Good Conduct Medal, grudgingly awarded. While in the army, George was stationed for a spell on Long Island. He liked it so much that upon being discharged, he came back there to live with his bride, whom he'd married six months previously. After returning to civilian life, George's first job was as a staff artist for another comic publishing house. He also attended night classes at the Art Students League in N. Y. C. George, his lovely wife Evelyn, and their four-year-old daughter, Carol, are now living in a cute little ranch house in Levittown, Long Island. His hobbies include: aviation . . . especially World War I vintage, loading, sports of all kinds, loading, eating, and . . . you guessed it . . . loading! George's work . . . which has been enthusiastically received by you readers . . . appears in E.C.'s three horror mags, two war mags, and two SuspensStory mags!

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! WELCOME, BOILS AND BOWLS... WELCOME TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR. THIS IS YOUR HORROR-HOST, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, INVITING YOU IN TO HEAR ANOTHER BRISTLY SELECTION FROM MY DISGUSTING COLLECTION. PERHAPS, BEFORE I START MY CHILLING TALE, YOU MIGHT LIKE TO PLAY A LITTLE GAME WITH ME? LIKE... SAY... OLD MAID? I HAVE A REAL LIVE OLD MAID! NO? Oh... TOO BAD! THEN I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURLING TALE I CALL...

**FARE TONIGHT,
FOLLOWED BY
INCREASING
CLOTTYNES...**



YOU SLAM DOWN THE TRUNK-LID OF YOUR TAXI-CAB AND LOOK AROUND. THE NIGHT IS DUMP AND A FAINT TRACE OF FOG DRIFTS IN FROM THE BAY. CHALLENGING YOU TO THE BONE, YOU STAND THERE FOR A MOMENT, SHIVERING. YOU FUMBLE IN YOUR JACKET POCKET FOR A CIGARETTE, PULL OUT A HALF-EMPTY PACK AND SHAKE ONE BETWEEN YOUR LIPS. THE FLAME OF THE MATCH, FLARING UP IN THE BLOOD, BURNS YOUR EYES, AND EVEN AFTER YOU'VE BLOWN IT OUT, ITS GLOW STILL DANCES BEFORE YOU....

HMMPH... NICE NIGHT...
FOR A MURDER!



YOU SHUFFLE AROUND TO THE FRONT OF YOUR CAB, BRINE OPEN THE DOOR, AND SETTLE INSIDE ON THE MOST COLD LEATHER DRIVER'S SEAT. YOU SIT THERE FOR A MOMENT, SUCKING IN THE DRY SMOKE FROM YOUR BUTT AND SWALLOWING IT WHOLE INTO YOUR LUNGS. THEN YOU START THE ENGINE.

THINK I'LL CRUISE THE WEST SIDE, TONIGHT!



THE FOG HAS SETTLED ITS BLANKET OF GREY MIST UPON YOUR WINDSHIELD, SO YOU SNAP ON THE WIPERS. INDUSTRIOUS LITTLE FINGERS WHIP BACK AND FORTH, SHAVING THE WATER AWAY. YOU PEER THROUGH THE CLEAR OPENING AT THE DISTORTED ASPHALT AHEAD. THE STREETS ARE DESERTED.

"DROPPED?" NOT A DOLL. AROUND? WHAT A NIGHT TO TRY TO SCRAPE UP A FARE!



NOW IT HAS BEGUN TO RAIN, A SOFT DRIZZLE AT FIRST, THEN HEAVIER AND HEAVIER... THE WATER CAROOLING BEFORE YOU... THE INDUSTRIOUS LITTLE WIPERS SCRAMBLING MADLY BACK AND FORTH... CLEARING IT AWAY, FIRST TO ONE SIDE... THEN THE OTHER.

WELL, THAT FINISHED IT! I'LL NEVER GET A FARE, NOW.



YOU CRUISE FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER, SEARCHING THE SIDEWALKS FOR A SIGNALING PASSERBY... A HOMEWARD-BOUND CUSTOMER, BUT YOU SEE NO ONE. YOU SHRUG AND PULL UP TO A DESERTED MACK STAND.

NO USE WASTING GAS. I'LL PARK HERE BY THE SUBWAY EXIT.



YOU SHUT OFF THE ENGINE AND SIT BACK, EXTRACTING ANOTHER BUTT FROM YOUR EMPTY PACK. A ROAR BELOW TELLS YOU THAT A SUBWAY TRAIN HAS PULLED IN. A FEW SECONDS LATER, FIGURES POUR FROM THE SUBWAY EXIT...

TAXI? TAXI LADY? TAXI?



THE SUBWAY RIDERS HURRY OFF INTO THE WET SLOOM. THE NEWSIE AT THE CORNER CALLS AFTER THEM, TRYING TO UNLOD HIS NIGHT'S PAPER ORDER.

READ ALL ABOUT IT! ANOTHER BODY FOUND! ANOTHER MURDER! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

TAXI? TAXI? TAXI?



THE PUSHING THALLOWS ARE GONE. THE NIGHT AND THE RAIN SETTLE DOWN AGAIN. YOU STARE ACROSS THE MIRRORING SIDEWALK TO THE NEWSSTAND. ANOTHER HURDLE, CURIOSITY GETS THE BETTER OF YOU. YOU SNAP OPEN THE CAB-DOOR AND DART THROUGH THE RAIN TO THE PROTECTION OF THE STAND'S OVERHANG...

PAPER, MISTERY?

YEAH, THANKS!



YOU SETTLE BACK IN YOUR CAB SHOE MORE, LIGHT UP ANOTHER BUTT, AND OPEN THE PAPER. THE HEADLINES SCREAM AT YOU...

THE CORPSE OF A THIRTY YEAR OLD WOMAN WAS FOUND DRAINED OF ITS BLOOD LAST NIGHT. THIS IS THE THIRTEENTH VICTIM TO DATE...



ANOTHER MURDER. FOURTEEN OF THEM NOW. EACH BODY DRAINED OF ITS BLOOD. YOUR EYES SWEEP OVER THE COLUMNS OF TINY PRINT. THE DORY DETAILS, SUDDENLY, A PARAGRAPH CATCHES YOUR ATTENTION...

A SUGGESTION THAT A VAMPIRE MIGHT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE MURDERS WAS OFFERED BY DR. FREDERICK MULLER, NOTED MYTHOLOGIST. POLICE HAVE REFUTED THIS POSSIBILITY.



YOU SHIVER. THE WORK OF A VAMPIRE. YOU LOOK AROUND UNCOMFORTABLY, PEERING OUT AT THE DOWNGRAVE. THE RAIN POUNDS DOWN ON YOUR CAR-ROOF. CHATTERING LOVELY...

A... A VAMPIRE? WHO WOULD BELIEVE IT?



THE NIGHT SWIMS IN A TORRENT BEFORE YOUR EYES. THE DARKNESS MELTS FROM THE BLACKNESS ABOVE AND SPATTERS DOWN ON THE ENGINE HOOD... CASCADES DOWN THE WINDSHIELD IN SHEETS OF DANCING LIGHTS. SUDDENLY HE IS BEHIND YOU, HIS BLACK OVERCOAT COLLAR TURNED UP, COVERING THE LOWER PART OF HIS FACE... HIS BLACK HAT-BRIM TURNED DOWN, SHIELDING THE UPPER PART. ONLY HIS EYES GLARE LIKE FIRE-LIGHTS FROM THE REVERBER OF HIS SMOCKETS...



HE MUTTERS THE STREET AND NUMBER AND SLIDES INTO THE BACK SEAT. HE CARRIES A BRIFCASE, WHICH HE HOLDS ON HIS LAP. YOU HESITATE AND PULL AWAY, GRINNING. A CUSTOMER... AT LAST, YOU GLANCE AT HIM IN THE MIRROR...



THE ANSWER IS QUITE ALMOST INAUDIBLE. IT IS A BRIEF ARRANGEMENT THAT HE CANS NOT TO CONVERSE. YOU SPRING AND GLIDE YOUR HEAD THROUGH THE REFLECTIONS, AND THE TORRENTS TOWARD THE ADDRESS HE'S GIVEN YOU.



THE STREET IS IN ONE OF THE WORST NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CITY... A NARROW, LITTER-STREWN, COBBLE-STONE ALLEY NICHED BETWEEN BAD-FACED, STARRING TENEMENTS. YOUR PALE STEPS OUT INTO THE DOWNGRAVE...



HE SCURRIES INTO A DARKENED HALLWAY AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE SHADOWS. YOU SHRUG, GLANCE AT THE METER, AND SETTLE BACK TO WAIT THE RAIN IS LETTING UP NOW. THE STREET IS A BLACK MIRROR REFLECTING THE SQUALOR THAT RISES IT AT EITHER CURB. SOMETHING IN THE MIRROR CATCHES YOUR EYE...

HIS BRIEFCASE.

YOU TURN AROUND AND STARE AT THE SHINY NEW LEATHER BRIEFCASE YOUR CUSTOMER HAS LEFT ON THE BACK SEAT. THE GOLD INITIALS PULSATE IN THE LIGHT FROM THE STREET LAMP.

E.M., PH.D? E.M., PH.D? WHAT IS THERE ABOUT THOSE INITIALS?

THE NEWSPAPER ROLLED UP BESIDE YOU REMINDS YOU OF COURSE.

OF COURSE? E.M., ROBERT MULLER, THE NOTED MYTHOLOGIST... THE MAN WHO IS TRYING TO CONVINCE THE POLICE THAT THE JORDONSON IS A VAMPIRE.

YOU PULL OUT YOUR PACK OF BUTTS, FISHING FOR ANOTHER CIGARETTE. THE PACK IS EMPTY. YOU CURSE. FAR DOWN THE BLOCK, AT THE CORNER, A DIM LIGHT FILTERS THROUGH A STONE WINDOW, SILHOUETTING THE LETTERS PAINTED ON IT...

BAR? THEY'D HAVE A CIGARETTE MACHINE.

YOU SWING FROM THE CAR AND START DOWN THE LONG DARK STREET. THE RAIN HAS STOPPED. A MUDDY STREAM OF WATER RUSHES HEADLONG AT THE CURBSIDE POURING DOWN INTO A FOWL-SMELLING SEWER, PULLING THE LAST TRACES OF RAIN WITH IT. UP ABOVE, THE CLOUDS ARE BREAKING UP... AND HERE AND THERE, A STAR BLINKS THROUGH A BLACK HOLE IN THE GREY COVER...

GOING TO BE A NICE NIGHT AFTER ALL.

YOU'RE ALMOST TO THE CORNER WHEN THE LIGHTS IN THE BAR-WINDOW DISAPPEAR AND BLACKNESS DESCENDS. THE SIGN IN THE DOOR LAUGHS AT YOU, AND THE LAUGH ECHOES OVER THE SLEAZY STREETS AND OFF THE GRIMING FACED OF THE TENEMENTS.

CLOSED! BLAST IT...

CLOSED

THE LAUGH DIES. SILENCE CLOSES IN, THICK, BLACK, FRIGHTENING SILENCE. STRANGE. NO RADIO PLAYING? NO BABY CRYING? NO SOUNDS OF THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE BEHIND THE WHITE TENEMENT FACADES? JUST SILENCE...

NO WONDER? THESE TENEMENTS ARE ALL BOARDED UP. THEY'RE DESERVED.

THEN WHY THE HELL? WHAT BUSINESS COULD A BAR DO IN A CONFINED TENEMENT DISTRICT? YOU START BACK TOWARD YOUR CAR, AND THEN YOU HEAR THEM... AT FIRST YOU THINK THEY'RE SCHOOLS OF YOUR OWN... BUT WHEN YOU STOP, THEY CONTINUE...

FOOTSTEPS. SOMEONE'S FOLLOWING ME.



YOU QUICKEN YOUR STEPS, THE CAR IS A MILLION MILES AWAY BEHIND YOU, THE FOOTSTEPS INCREASE THEIR TEMPO TOO. YOU BEGIN TO RUN...

THE CAR? I'LL NEVER REACH IT IN TIME.



THE OPEN HALLWAY YAWNS AT YOU. YOU DUCK IN, CRINKLING IN THE SHADOWS. A FIGURE HURRIES BY... BLACK OVERCOAT... BLACK HAT...

HIM? MY CUSTOMER? MULLER.



YOU HEAR HIS FOOTSTEPS POUNDING UP THE BLOCK. IN YOUR CHEST, YOUR HEART IS POUNDING TOO, THEN THE FOOTSTEPS STOP... AND YOUR HEART SLIPS A BEAT.

HE'S COMING BACK?



YOU BACK OFF INTO THE GLOOM. THE FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. HE STANDS FRAMED IN THE HALLWAY ENTRANCE. HIS EYES BURNING LIKE TWO WHITE-HOT COALS.

YOU CAN'T ESCAPE, MY FRIEND! YOU'RE TRAPPED!



HIS EYES SEEM TO PIERCE THE DARKNESS, SEEM TO SEARCH YOU OUT OF THE SHADOWS. CAN HE SEE YOU THERE? CAN HIS EYES PENETRATE THE NIGHT LIKE A LITE.

LIKE A BAT'S? LIKE A VAMPIRE'S?



YOU SHRIEK. YOU OPEN YOUR QUIVERING LIPS AND YOU SHRIEK. AND YOU TURN AND RUN... DOWN THE LONG BLACK CORRIDOR, STUMBLING, GETTING UP, RUNNING AGAIN.

IT'S NO USE? YOU'RE TRAPPED! I'VE CAUGHT YOU!

NO! NO!



THE CELLAR DOOR HINGS CRAZILY ON BROKEN RUSTED HINGES. STEPS LEAD DOWNWARD INTO BLACKNESS. YOU LENSE THROUGH...



THE STEPS, ROTTED AND DECAYED, GIVE WAY BENEATH YOUR WEIGHT AND YOU PLUNGE INTO THE DARKNESS...



YOU STRUGGLE TO YOUR FEET ABOVE YOU, YOUR CUSTOMER PEERS DOWN THROUGH THE CELLAR DOORWAY...



AND HIS LAUGH COMES LOUDLY THROUGH THE DAMP DARK CELLAR...

SUDDENLY THERE ARE STRANGE SOUNDS ABOUT YOU, CREAKING NOISES... AND DEEP SINGS... AND FLUTTERINGS IN THE DARK. THE CELLAR IS FILLED WITH LOW, EVIL-LOOKING BOXES, NO, NOT BOXES AT ALL...



THE LIDS HAVE COME ALIVE NOW, SLIPPING FROM THE COFFINS, SWINGING UPWARD, FALLING BACK, GHOST-FACED FIGURES, WITH SLANTED EYES AND FANGED MOUTHS OODING SPITTLE, RISE FROM THEIR DEPTHS...



THEY STUMBLE TOWARD YOU, SHRIEKING... LAUGHING... REACHING OUT...



AND THEN THEY ARE UPON YOU, THEIR FANGS RIPPING AND TEARING AT YOUR FLESH... THEIR DRY LIPS CLOSING OVER YOUR WOUNDS, DRAWING THE LIFE-FLUID THAT POURS RED FROM THEM...



AND YOU SCREAM YOU ARE HELPLESS UNDER THEIR ORLAUGHT, THERE IS NOTHING ELSE TO DO BUT SCREAM...

THE SCREAM ECHOES AND RE-ECHOES IN YOUR EARS. YOU CLAW AT THE COLD LEATHER SEAT. AND YOU OPEN YOUR EYES...

WONT WHAT... WHERE AM I?



THE RAIN CHATTERS ON YOUR CAR ROOF. PEOPLE POUR FROM THE SUBWAY EXIT. THE NEWSIE CHANTS AT THEM...

READ ALL ABOUT IT! ANOTHER BOOF FOUND! ANOTHER MURDER! READ ALL ABOUT IT!



YOU'RE BACK AT THE BACK-SEAT, BY THE SUBWAY EXIT. THE REAL-ITISH DREAMS UPON YOU.

I... I FELL ASLEEP. I'VE BEEN DREAMING!



YOU STARE DOWN AT THE OPEN PAPER ON YOUR LAP HIS NAME SEEMS TO RISE FROM THE BLOODS OF TYPE... MANGIFIED... BLACK AND SHINING...

DR. ROBERT MULLER? WHY DID I DREAM ABOUT HIM? WHY...



AND THEN HE IS BESIDE YOU, HIS BLACK OVERCOAT PULLED UP, HIS BLACK HAT-BRIM TURNED DOWN, AND HIS EYES GLARING LIKE FIRE-LIGHTS

BOOF?

NO BOOF? HOP IN? WHERE TO?



YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK AT THE INITIALS ON THE BRIEF-CASE HE IS CARRYING. YOU KNOW WHO HE IS. HE MUTTERS THE STREET AND NUMBER AND SLIDES INTO THE BACK SEAT. YOU MESH GEARS AND PULL AWAY.

WHY DID I DREAM ABOUT HIM? AND THE VAMPIRES... ATTACKING ME? WHAT DID IT ALL MEAN?



SUREDEMLY, YOU KNOW. YOU KNOW THE MEANING OF YOUR NIGHTMARE. AND YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST DO...

THIS ISN'T THE WAY...

IT'S A SHORT-CUT, DOCTOR MULLER...



YOU STOP THE CAR, IT'S ONE OF THE WORST NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CITY, THE NEIGHBORHOOD YOU DREAMED ABOUT.

YOU, YOU KNOW ME?

YES, DOCTOR! SET OUT...



IT'S CLEAR NOW, THE WHOLE DREAM IS CLEAR, OR ROBERT MULLER IS A *PHREAF* TO YOU. *THAT'S* WHY YOU DREAMED OF HIM FOLLOWING YOU... *TRACKING* YOU DOWN...

MY... MY BRIEFCASE! I LEFT IT ON THE SEAT!

YOU WON'T NEED IT, DOC.



AND THE *VAMPIRE*... THE ONE THAT ATTACKED YOU IN THE CELLAR. DOCTOR MULLER *KNOWS* ABOUT VAMPIRES. ALL ABOUT THEM. SOONER OR LATER HE'D CONVINCE THE POLICE.

WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME? THIS HALLWAY. IT'S SO DARK...

KEEP GOING!



IT WOULD BE HIS *WAST* KNOWLEDGE OF VAMPIRES THAT WOULD FINALLY MEAN YOUR ULTIMATE DEATH. THE DREAM MADE SENSE. THE DREAM WAS A WARNING.

WHO ARE YOU? WHO *ON* NO! NO! MY GOD!

YES, DOCTOR! YES...



HE STRUGGLES, BUT YOU ARE STRONG. YOU BEND AND BARE YOUR FANGS INTO HIS SOFT WHITE CYPOLING NECK... DRAWING IN THE THICK RED LIFE-FLUID THAT YOU MUST HAVE...



AND WHEN THE LAST DROP IS GONE, YOU FLUNG HIS LIFELESS BODY DOWN THE ROTTED CELLAR STEPS WITH THE OTHERS ONLY *THIRTEEN* VICTIMS HADN'T TILL THEY FIND THE *REST* DOWN THERE! AS DAWN BREAKS, YOU OPEN THE TRUNK OF YOUR CAR, CRAWL IN ONTO THE THIN LAYER OF SOIL AND YAWN...

IS... NO-HOW... BETTER GET A *WADD* CAT'S REST TODAY? IMAGINE... A VAMPIRE FALLING ASLEEP AT NIGHT? AND *DREAMING*, YET...



HEH, HEH, NOW *SOME* PEOPLE MIGHT ACCUSE ME OF SPINNING *WACK* FABLES, BUT YOU WOULDN'T AGREE, *WOULD* YOU, RIGH? THE ONLY THING I'M *BULLY* OF IS *TALKING* TO YOUR IMAGINATION SINCE IN A WHILE, WELL, I'VE GOT TO *METER* FRIENDS, SO I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE WALT-KEEPER FOR HIS OFFERING. WHO'S THE *FRIEND*, YOU ASK? OH, SOME *DOCTOR* I KNOW. THEY SPOTTED HIM AS A *WACK* WHEN HE CAME TO NEW YORK. SOLD HIM THE *VAMPIRE* STATE *WOLFGANG*, ISN'T THAT A *BLOODY* SHAME? *WEE* NOW. DID YOU *LATER*?



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELTER VENTURE INTO THE VAULT, VULTURES. THIS IS YOUR HOOF IN HOWLS, THE VAULT-KEEPER. READY TO NARRATE ANOTHER HAUNTING NOVELETTE FROM MY GRANKLY COLLECTION. SO COME IN, SIT DOWN ON THAT PILE OF SHOE-BOKS THERE, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLING FARN I CALL...

CURIOSITY KILLED...



THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT, HE'S RIGHT OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM DOOR. SOMEBODY ON LATER HE'LL GET IT OPEN AND I'LL... I'LL BE MURDERED. I'M SCRAMBLING THIS DOWN AS FAST AS I CAN SO YOU'LL KNOW THE WHOLE STORY. MY NAME IS HENRIETTA CLAYTON. I LIVE IN THE ROYAL ARMS APARTMENT HOTEL. IT ALL STARTED THE MORNING I WENT DOWN THE HALL TO VISIT MY FRIEND, EMILY DUNHAM.

YES, OH, IT'S FOLLOWS, MRS. CLAYTON.

IS EMILY AT HOME, MR. DUNHAM?
I...EH...WANTED TO GET A RECIPE...



FIRST LET ME SAY THAT, EVER SINCE I'D KNOWN HIM, WALLACE DURAND HAD ALWAYS BEEN SHY, QUIET, AND COMPLETELY DOMINATED BY HIS WIFE, EMILY. THAT MORNING, HE SEEMED LIKE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PERSON. HE BRANDED AT ME...

EMILY'S GONE, MRS. CLAYTON SHE'S TAKEN A TRIP... TO THE COAST... TO VISIT RELATIVES.

OH? SHE DIDN'T MENTION IT!



WALLACE DURAND STOOD STRAIGHT, LOOKING AT ME DEFIANTLY. HE SEEMED TALLER SOMEDAY... TALLER THAN HE'D EVER BEEN - LIKE HEAVY WEIGHTS HAD BEEN DROPPED FROM HIS TIRED SHOULDERS...

IT WAS SUDDEN, MRS. CLAYTON. SHE LEFT LAST NIGHT, AND NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

Y-YES, MR. DURAND? I'M SORRY I DISTURBED YOU...



HE SLAMMED THE DOOR - SLAMMED IT, MIND YOURS DURAND... THE MIDDLETOWN... THE WEAKLING... SLAMMED THE DOOR IN MY FACE, I STOOD THERE SHOOKED! I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT...

EMILY'S GONE AWAY BEFORE, BUT WALLACE DURAND HAD NEVER BEHAVED THAT WAY WHILE SHE'S BEEN GONE. IT WAS AS IF HE KNEW SHE WASN'T COMING BACK...

I RANG FOR THE ELEVATOR. A COLD SHIVER RAN UP MY SPINE. I GLANCED AT MY WATCH, 8:40 STILL TIME.

WHAT? WHAT'S COME OVER HIM? HE'S LIKE A DIFFERENT MAN? HE'S NEVER ACTED LIKE THAT?

SOMETHING'S WRONG, I FEEL IT IN MY BONES! HE'S... HE'S DONE SOMETHING TO EMILY...



GOOD MORNING, MRS. CLAYTON.

GOOD MORNING, GEORGE... ER... YOU BEEN ON ALL NIGHT?



SINCE NINE P.M., WASN'T ANYTHING WRONG?

DID YOU TAKE MRS. DURAND DOWN LAST NIGHT, GEORGE? EMILY DURAND? SHE WOULD HAVE HAD A SUITCASE...

NO, WAH? I BROUGHT YOU AND MRS. DURAND UP AT TEN P.M. LAST NIGHT, REMEMBER? THAT'S THE LAST I SAW OF HER. DIDN'T TAKE HER DOWN LAST NIGHT AT ALL!

I SEE? OH, SUPPOSE SHE WALKED DOWN, GEORGE? WHO'S SHE HERE?



WALKED DOWN, MR. SLAYTON? FOURTEEN FLOORS? I HARDLY THINK SHE'D WALK DOWN, BESIDES, IF SHE DID, JED WOULD HAVE SEEN HER. HE WAS AT THE DESK ALL NIGHT... WORKIN' THE SHY TOWNSHIP.

ASK HIM FOR ME, WILL YOU, GEORGE? ASK JED IF HE SAW MRS. OR MR. DURAND LAST NIGHT?

GEORGE NODDED. THE ELEVATOR DOOR SLID CLOSED, AND IT WHINNED AWAY. I WATCHED THE HAND ABOVE SWING SLOWLY AROUND TOWARDS ONE. I WENT BACK TO MY OWN APARTMENT. MILTON WAS GETTING INTO HIS COAT. MILTON IS MY HUSBAND...

WELL, HENRIETTA... MILTON? HE'S GOOD-BYE! I'M OFF...

HUH? WHO? MR. DURAND? HE'S KILLED EMILY? I KNOW IT!



MILTON LOOKED AT ME AND BEGAN TO GIGGLE...

WALLY? KILL EMILY? DON'T BE SILLY! HE... HE WOULDN'T HAVE THE NERVE! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SO?

HE'S ACTING SO STRANGELY, SO FUNNY. HE SAID EMILY WENT ON A TRIP, BUT I CHECKED. SHE HADN'T LEFT THIS BUILDING SINCE HE CAME HOME FROM THE WOMEN'S SOCIAL LAST NIGHT.



I HEARD THE ELEVATOR DOOR OUTSIDE SLIDE OPEN. I PEERED OUT, GEORGE WAS COMING TOWARD MY APARTMENT.

WELL, GEORGE? WHAT DID JED SAY?

HE SAID NOBODY CAME DOWN THOSE STAIRS LAST NIGHT, MA'AM. BUT NOBODY...



I THANKED GEORGE AND HE SHUFFLED OFF. I TURNED TO MILTON...

THEN SHE'S STILL IN THERE, MILTON? POOR EMILY... LYIN' DEAD IN THAT APARTMENT.

DON'T YOU THINK THAT IF WALLY DID MURDER EMILY, HE'D HAVE GOTTEN RID OF HER BODY, HENRIETTA?



NOW, MILTON? THAT'S JUST IT! HOW? HE COULDN'T CARRY HER BODY DOWN FOURTEEN FLIGHTS, BESIDES, JED SAID NOBODY CAME DOWN THE STAIRS LAST NIGHT. HE COULDN'T TAKE HER DOWN IN THE ELEVATOR, AND THE FIRE-ESCAPE WOULD BE TOO RISKY. NO? SHE'S STILL IN THERE?

WELL, I'M LATE. I'VE GOT TO GO TO THE OFFICE. LOOK, HENRIETTA... IF YOU'RE SO SURE WHY DON'T YOU CALL THE POLICE?



MILTON LEFT AND I HEARD THE ELEVATOR COME AND TAKE HIM DOWN. I WENT TO THE PHONE. I PICKED UP THE RECEIVER. I HESITATED...

I I CAN'T CALL THE POLICE. I HAVE NO PROOF. I'VE GOT TO HAVE PROOF.



I PUT DOWN THE PHONE AND WENT TO THE KITCHEN. I TOOK A MEASURING CUP FROM THE CUPBOARD AND WENT DOWN THE HALL TO THE DURAND APARTMENT. I KNOCKED. I HEARD FOOTSTEPS MOVING AROUND INSIDE, AND WALLACE DURAND OPENED THE DOOR...

OH, IT'S YOU AGAIN. NOW WHAT?

COULD I BORROW A CUP OF SUGAR, MR. DURAND? I'M A LITTLE SHORT?



I STARTED IN BUT MR. DURAND BLOCKED MY WAY. HE LIFTED THE CUP FROM MY HAND...

I'LL GET IT FOR YOU, MRS. CLAYTON.

OH, THANKS.



HE CLOSED THE DOOR AND LOCKED IT. HE WOULDN'T LET ME IN. HE WAS HIDING SOMETHING, ALL RIGHT. EMILY WAS IN THERE? POOR EMILY...

HERE YOU ARE?

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, MR. DURAND.



HE SLAMMED THE DOOR. I WAS ALONE IN THE HALL. I WENT BACK TO MY APARTMENT. MY HAND SHOOK...

ALL RIGHT, WALLACE. DURAND? ALL RIGHT? I'LL GET THE PROOF. YOU'LL SEE...



I PULLED A CHAIR UP TO THE APARTMENT DOOR AND SAT DOWN. I OPENED IT A CRACK SO I COULD WATCH THE DURAND'S DOOR. I WAITED. AFTER AN HOUR, MR. DURAND CAME OUT... LOCKED THE DOOR CAREFULLY... AND PRESSED THE ELEVATOR BELL...



WHEN HE WAS GONE, I DARTED ACROSS THE LIVING ROOM AND OUT THE FRENCH DOORS. THE DURANDS AND WE SHARED A TERRACE. I CROSSED THE LOW DIVIDING WALL AND PEELED INTO THEIR APARTMENT THE BLINDS WERE SHOWN. I COULDN'T SEE. THE DOOR WAS LOCKED...

I WON'T GIVE UP. I WON'T. HE'S GOING TO HAVE TO TRY TO GET RID OF HIS BODY. AND WHEN HE DOES...



ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER, WALLACE DURAND CAME BACK. HE CARRIED A SMALL CARTON ABOUT THE SIZE OF A SHOE-BOX...



HE LET HIMSELF INTO HIS APARTMENT, AND I HEARD HIM LOCK IT FROM THE INSIDE. I TOOK THE CUP OF SUGAR AND WENT DOWN THE HALL AND KNOCKED...



HE SEEMED ANNOYED. HE SMATCHED THE SUGAR, LOCKED THE DOOR, AND RETURNED WITH THE EMPTY GLASS...



HE SLAMMED THE DOOR IN MY FACE...



HE WAS DOING SOMETHING ALL RIGHT. IT WAS OBVIOUS. I WAS DETERMINED TO PROVE HIS HORRIFICOUS DEED. SO I WATCHED EVERY DAY. HE WENT OUT IN THE MORNING **EMPTY HANDED**...



AND EVERY DAY HE CAME BACK WITH ANOTHER SHOE-BOX...



FINALLY AFTER TWO MONTHS OF THIS...GOING OUT **EMPTY-HANDED** AND COMING BACK TWO HOURS LATER WITH THE INEVITABLE **SHOE BOX**, I ACCUSED HIM ONE DAY...



I THOUGHT MY EARS WERE DECEIVING ME. I HEARD IT PLAIN AS DAY. A SCRATCHING SOUND INSIDE THE BOX HE WAS CARRYING...

N-NEVER, MR. DURAND?

EMILY'S LEFT ME FOR GOOD? NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND...



HE WENT INSIDE. I WENT BACK TO MY APARTMENT. I TRIED TO THINK. WHAT DID HE HAVE IN THAT BOX? WAS EMILY'S BODY STILL IN THAT APARTMENT, OR HAD WALLACE DURAND MANAGED TO GET RID OF IT? AND THEN, THAT NIGHT, AS I RODE THE LIVING ROOM FLOOR...



WHAT'S THAT?

THERE WAS A FLAPPING SOUND OUT ON THE TERRACE. I TIPTOED TO THE FRENCH DOORS. WALLACE DURAND WAS OUT THERE...AND HE HELD SOMETHING IN HIS OUTSTRETCHED HANDS...

A. A PIGEON!



M.R. DURAND CHECKED THE SMALL CAN STRAPPED TO THE PIGEON'S LEG. THEN HE TOSSED THE BIRD INTO THE AIR AND WATCHED IT FLY OFF INTO THE NIGHT...

A...ROMING PIGEON!



I WOKE UP MILTON. I TOLD HIM WHAT I'D SEEN...

SO WHAT? WHAT IN BLAZES WAS ONE THING TO DO WITH THE OTHER?

DON'T YOU SEE, MILTON? HE'S BEEN GETTING RID OF EMILY'S REMAINS THAT WAS A LITTLE BIT AT A TIME... IN THAT CAN STRAPPED TO THE PIGEON'S LEG...



GOOD LORD. IT WOULD TAKE MONTHS!

I'M GOING TO CALL THE POLICE.



NOT WAIT? YOU CAN'T BE SURE? WHY DON'T YOU FOLLOW HIM TOMORROW MORNING? FIND OUT WHERE HE SETS THOSE BIRDS?



AND THEN I'LL SEE WHAT HE DOES WITH THE CONTENTS OF THE CAN.

THAT'LL BE THE PROOF YOU NEED!

YES. YES.



I TOOK MILTON'S ADVICE... AND THE NEXT DAY, I FOLLOWED WALLACE DURAND WHEN HE LEFT THE ROYAL ARMS APARTMENT HOTEL. HE TOOK A SUBWAY OUT OF THE CITY TO THE END OF THE LINE, THEN A BUS. I FOLLOWED THE BUS IN A TAXI...

HE'S GETTING OFF! ALL RIGHT, DRIVER. I'LL GET OUT HERE...



MR. DURAND WENT TO THE REAR OF A RUNDOWN SHACK. I COULD HEAR THE LOUD BARKING OF DOGS...

SO THAT'S IT...



IT WAS ALL SO CLEAR. I WATCHED HIM UNTIL THE CAR FROM THE HOMING PIGEON THAT HAD ARRIVED THAT NIGHT AND EMPTY THE CONTENTS INTO THE KENNEL FULL OF SLEEPING HUNGRY DOGS...



THEN HE TOOK ANOTHER PEEDEE FROM THE COUP, PLACED IT IN A SHOE-BOX AND WENT AWAY. I WAITED UNTIL HE WAS GONE BEFORE I CAME OUT OF MY HIDE-PLACE. I FELT SICK... NAUSEOUS... POOR EMILY! WHEN I FINALLY GOT BACK TO MY APARTMENT...

MILTON YOU'RE HOME EARLY? YES, EMILY! COME INS I'VE BEEN WAITING!



MILTON LOOKED STRANGE. HE HAD A WILD GLEAM IN HIS USUALLY SAD EYES. EMILY AND I HAD BEEN ATTRACTED TO EACH OTHER BECAUSE WE WERE SO MUCH ALIKE... DOMINATING WIVES WHO LOOMED OVER SHY, QUIET, MELLOWED-HUSBANDS...

MILTON! WHAT, WHAT'S A SHOE-BOX, EMILY... THAT YOU HAVE THERE?



I HEARD THE UNMISTAKABLE COOING OF A PIGEON...

I SCREAMED AND RUSHED FOR THE BED-ROOM. I LOCKED MYSELF IN. I WAS TRAPPED. MILTON DISGLED... HIS VOICE DRIFTING THROUGH THE DOOR...

WE PLANNED IT THIS WAY, HENRIETTA! FIRST WALLY, THEN WE'VE RENTED THE SHACK, THE DOGS, THE PIGEONS... BUT YOU FOUND OUT... TOO SOON...



THE DOOR IS OPENING. I'LL HAVE TO STOP WRITING... SO NOW, EVEN THOUGH WALLY ISN'T THROUGH GETTING RID OF EMILY'S BOOT... I'LL HAVE TO START HENRIETTA... START BY KILLING YOU... THEN CUTTING YOU UP INTO TINY LITTLE PIECES... BIG ENOUGH TO FIT IN CANS...



HE'S COMING TOWARD ME. HE'S

AT THIS POINT OUR MANUSCRIPT ENDS, KIDDIES... ENDS IN A BLOODY SNAKE! HENRIETTA IS NOW... FOR THE BIRDS! NOW DID I GET HOLD OF THIS LITTLE YARN, YOU ASK? SO WHO DO YOU THINK OWNED THE SHACK, THE DOGS... THE PIGEONS?

THAT WAS THE DEAL! WALLY AND MILTON GOT THE USE OF THEM FOR THE STORY RIGHTS, NEHEH. NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THE CRAFT-KEEPER. SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, THE MAG OF HORRORFUL THEM. COOOO!



**WE AT E.C. ARE PROUDEST
OF OUR SCIENCE - FICTION
MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...**



**LOOK FOR
THESE SEALS
WHEN YOU BUY!**

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**TIGHT
SQUEEZE!**

Not ten seconds after Kendall had seized the payroll bag and started toward the factory exit, he knew he was being pursued. He could hear their feet clattering along the concrete walk behind him, then a shot screamed along the corridor and ricocheted off the wall not five feet from his head. They were armed . . . and they meant business. And from the sound their shoes were making, there were at least three guards tracking him.

Almost in panic, Kendall clawed at his coat pocket and fumbled his gun free as he ran. It was the three guards against him . . . their lives against his own, he thought as he fled. They had him badly outnumbered . . . there wasn't much chance for him to escape . . .

Then he saw the steel staircase spiraling up far overhead to the catwalk which ran the length of the factory. This might help him squeeze out of the trap, Kendall thought, as he raced frenziedly up the steps. In another moment he was scampering along the catwalk and could hear them pounding up the steps after him. In a second they'd have him cornered; if he turned to fight, their bullets would cut him down in the first exchange of hot lead. And if he surrendered, it meant conviction for the fourth time . . . imprisonment for the rest of his life!

He stopped momentarily, amazement on his face. There, just a short

jump below, was a small area surrounded by steel walls. If he could just reach that haven, he'd be able to shoot at the guards as they came after him along the catwalk. And their own shots would be shrugged aside by those gleaming metal plates!

The jump jarred him more than he had expected: it was a half-minute before he recovered his balance and turned back to face the oncoming guards. The first of them reared up above him, leveled his gun. But he never pulled the trigger, because a bullet from below sent him reeling backwards.

Kendall crouched lower behind the steel walls . . . heard the guards' bullets ploughing into the plates with a shrill whine, then bounce harmlessly aside. He was safe, Kendall grinned to himself. At least for the moment. They couldn't get him with their guns . . . and if the two remaining guards gave him even the slightest target, he'd shoot to kill! Just one shot at each of the guards . . . that was all Kendall wanted . . .

A whirring sound made him pause in fear. He must be seeing things, he thought . . . but no! The steel plates that sheltered him . . . they were grinding toward one another, moving together ominously! He leaped to his feet and began to scream out his surrender, but it was too late! The walls could not be stopped . . . already they were pressing against him on each side. Already they were crushing his chest and legs . . . squeezing the breath out of his tortured lungs . . . mashing him into a bloody shadow on the sides of the huge steel vise he had heedlessly plunged into!



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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heh, heh! Guess all you EVANS fans can stop howling now! Gorgeous George's biography and pictures, as you probably noticed, and if you haven't, why not?, is on the inside front cover of this miserable mag. And now YOU can stop howling TOO, George! Ya Gads, these apologetic critics! Glory . . . glory . . . all they want is hate and fame! Now take ME! All I want is FORTUNE . . . and all I get is FAMOUS! (In famous would be a BETTER word, C.K., old boy!—ed.) I don't see them handing YOU TWO any laurel wreaths, you moon-buggy pervert! (Midway? What's "money," AL? Diana, Sil. Sounds familiar, but there sure ain't been none of that stuff 'round HERE in some time!—ed.) Ah, you poor, poor boy! Isn't it a pity? You'll have to drive your LAST YEAR'S Cadillac for a while yet! (But C.K., THE ASH-TRAYS are FULL!—ed.) Reckin'-buns, I presume! (O course . . . and KING-SIZE, too!—ed.) Oh, DIG those CRA-ZY good-natured! And now for the mail!

Dear Crypto-Keeper,

We are three intellectual college ghosts who spend our evenings reading your degenarous literature. The protagonists in your most horrible stories remind us of some of our long-lost dates. (Now we know what happened to them!) Due to our advanced education, we are properly equipped to fully appreciate your subtility and sarcasm. Please print this as we boys!! Degenerately yours,

Slimy Syd
Mammified Myrna
Fast Flava Javie

PROTAGONISTS!! Man! DIG those CRA-ZY co-eds!

Dear Fudge-Pace,

All of your stories turned everyone on the house a lovely shade of green. My Aunt Mawmaw was eating when she read your book, and she's been in the re-gurgitatorium to count word, so don't throw it up to me!! for the past week. I personally thank you most for crapp, but then again we all!

Believe Zorrich
Sanderlin, Ohio

CRA-ZY, man! That's what I said! DIG them CHARTELISE Ohioans!

Most Beloved Crypto-Keeper,

I'm a steady fan of yours, and enjoy all of the EC magz very much! Here are a few additional titles for your "horror but parads":

LADY OF PAIN (I will give you!)
GONE SQUISHIN'
I'LL DISMEMBER APRIL!
CAN'T HELP LOATHING THAT CLAN
OF NINE

Ralph Chapman
Anchorage, Alak.

THE WHITE STUFF OF DOVER
ALL OF ME . . . WHY NOT EAT ALL
OF ME
I'M RUKIN' OVER MY DEAD DOG
ROVER

Dick Daggen
Delaware, Iowa

MAN! That dog is REAL GONE!

How about that?
JUMBEDEYERBALLS
THE BLOODIEST BITS OF THE EAR
I WANT A GHOUL JUST LIKE THE
GHOUL THAT BURIED DEAR OLD
DAD

Maura (Ma) Miller
Chicago, Ill.

DIG that CRA-ZY barbershop!

How do you like:
OLD MACDONALD WAS ENHANCED
WHEN YOU AND I WERE HUNG,
MAGGIE!

Dave Gordon and
Dick Mervel
Brooklyn, Mass.

DIG that . . . (Hey C.K., Dutch the best . . . here comes COPS in a SQUAD CAR . . . down 90 mph!—ed.)

DOOOOOOOOHHHHH!
(O K, C.K./ They're gone!—ed.)
MAN! I thought they'd NEVER leave!

Dear C.K.,

The story by Ray Bradbury, "There Was an Old Woman," (T.C. No. 34) was kept. I read the original, but forgets did it more than justice with his fine illustrations!

Warren A. Feilberg
Cairo, Ill.

... I love your mag, but I think that Ray Bradbury's story . . . stunk! What happened?

Ed Redling
Paterson, N. J.

Well, we can't please EVERYBODY! Anyway, Mr. FREIBERG will be happy to find EC's adaptation of Mr. B's "The Handler" . . . also illustrated by Ghauri Ghaibani Inglish! . . . in the wind-up spot of this issue. Before closing, a couple of "it's-gonna-cost-you-money-if-a-ya-ruckus-enough-to-beat" announcements. A limited number (seven hundred fifty-two thousand one hundred and sixty-nine) of copies of the 3rd annual TALES OF TERROR, EC's anthology of horror and Supernatural, are now cluttering up the office. Help us unload? 25¢ Also . . . subscriptions to any EC mag 75¢ 6 magz! Address for either or both of the above, mail, poetry, books, letters, or 1955 Cadillac to:

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 166, Dept. 36
225 Lafayette St.
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

DIG that CRA-ZY weborg!

here's some more

HERE'S A TERROR-TALE OF
SPORTING LIFE! I CALL IT...

HOW GREEN WAS MY ALLEY



HIS JOB AS A TRAVELING SALESMAN HAD ENABLED ROBERT TO KEEP UP THE DECEPTION FOR THREE EXCITING YEARS. IT HAD BEEN SO SIMPLE TO CARRY ON HIS DOUBLE LIFE, SPENDING A WEEK WITH ANNE, A WEEK WITH JEAN, AND TWO WEEKS ON THE ROAD. YES, ROBERT SMITH WAS A NEARIST.

MUST YOU GO, DON'T YOU KNOW HOW I MISS YOU WHEN YOU'RE AWAY.



NOT TO EARN A LIVING, ANY, MONEY, WELL, GOOD-BYE, SEE YOU IN A MONTH.

ROBERT LOOKED DOWN AT SLIM, DARTING EYES. SHE SNUGGLED SLEEPILY IN THE BED, REACHING TOWARD HIM...

KISS ME GOOD-BYE AND WITH ME LUCK. THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S AMATEUR ATHLETIC TOURNAMENTS ARE TWO WEEKS OFF...



SAY I'LL ALMOST FORGIVE YOUR GOLF TOURNAMENTS. I DON'T YOU SOMETHING.

ROBERT WENT OUT TO THE CAR. HE UNLOCKED THE TRUNK. INSIDE WERE TWO CAREFULLY WRAPPED PACKAGES. HE CHOSE ONE AND BROUGHT IT BACK INTO THE HOUSE TO THE BEDROOM...



HERE, HONEY! FOR ME, FOR LOOK!
BOB, BOB SWEET!
WHAT IS IT?

ROBERT PUT OUT HIS HAND...

WAIT! DON'T OPEN IT NOW! NOT UNTIL YOU GET TO YOUR GOLF TOURNAMENT! IT'S A SURPRISE! IT MAY HELP YOU WIN...



AMY PUT DOWN THE PACKAGE AND SLIPPED HER ARMS AROUND ROBERT'S NECK...



I REALLY HAVE TO GET GOING, HONEY! IT'S LATE EVENING... BEAST! HOW CAN BUSINESS BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN... PLEASURE?

ROBERT SLIPPED AWAY FROM AMY AND PICKED UP HIS BAGS. SHE FOLLOWED HIM TO THE DOOR...

YOU'LL COME DOWN AND SEE ME PLAY, BOB? TWO WEEKS FROM TOMORROW... AT THE N.R.A.A. COURSE IN SPRINGDALE. I'LL BE AT THE HOTEL! I'VE RESERVED A DOUBLE ROOM!

OF COURSE, HONEY! YOU KNOW I WOULDN'T MISS MY WIFE'S CAPTURING THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL AMATEUR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP!



BOB CHUCKLED AS HE DROVE OFF...

MY ATHLETIC WOMEN! LITTLE DID I KNOW, WHEN I SUGGESTED TO AMY THAT SHE TAKE UP GOLF WHILE I WAS AWAY ON THE ROAD, THAT SHE'D BECOME SUCH AN EXPERT GOLFER. NOW SHE'S ENTERED IN THE N.R.A.A. CHAMPIONSHIPS.



THE CAR ROARED NORTH THROUGH SMALL TOWNS AND OVER MILES OF HIGHWAYS UNTIL, THE NEXT NIGHT...

HOB, HONEY! I THOUGHT YOU'D BE BACK TONIGHT! I CAME HOME FROM PRACTICE EARLY...



JEAN, BABY!

SHE TOSSED HER BODY TO THE FLOOR AND HE WAS IN HER ARMS. JEAN WAS HEAVIER THAN AMY. MORE MUSCULAR. HER HAIR FELL IN SOFT GOLDEN TRESSSES ABOUT HER BARE SHOULDERS...

OH, DARLING! I MISSED YOU! I MISSED YOU!



AND I MISSED YOU, JEAN. I DON'T LIKE THIS ONE-PEEK-A-MONTH DEAL ANY MORE THAN YOU DO...

HEN, HEN! WELL, HODDIES, THAT'S THE PICTURE. LOVER BOY COMMITTED BETWEEN WHEELS. ONE WEEK WITH SLIM, SWEET ANY... ONE WEEK WITH BROWN JEAN FOR THREE YEARS, THIS LITTLE RACKET HAD BEEN GOING ON. ANY TOOK UP SELF WHILE ROBERT DARLING WAS ON THE ROAD... KNOW WHAT JEAN TOOK UP? READ ON...



THE WEEK WAS OVER. JEAN AND BOB WERE SAYING GOOD-BYE...

WHAT IS IT, BOB? DON'T OPEN A SURPRISE... IF JEAN! YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT A TOURNAMENT LAST MONTH WHEN I WAS HOME...



YES, THE W.A.A.A. BOWLING TOURNAMENT, IT'S NEXT WEEK. I'VE QUALIFIED...

WELL, AFTER YOU GET THERE, THEN OPEN IT, HONEY. IT'LL HELP YOU WIN.



YES, JEAN HAD TAKEN UP BOWLING. ROBERT HAD SUGGESTED IT, AND LIKE ANY, JEAN HAD PROVEN HIMSELF VERY ADAPT AT NEW CHOSEN SPORT...

JUST THINK! MY WIFE YOU WILL COME DOWN AND A CHAMPION BOWLER. SEE ME BOWL NEXT WEEK, WON'T YOU, HONEY?



OF COURSE, JEAN. WHERE'D YOU SAY IT WAS?

SPRINGDALE! THE W.A.A.A.'S ALLEYS THERE.



SPRINGDALE! BUT... BUT I THOUGHT THERE WAS A GOLF COURSE THERE.

THERE IS, AND TENNIS COURTS, AND A POOL. THE W.A.A.A. HOLDS ALL ITS TOURNAMENTS THERE. YOU WILL COME, WON'T YOU? I HAVE A RESERVATION FOR A DOUBLE ROOM...

WELL, I'LL... I'LL TRY TO MAKE IT, HONEY. AT LEAST I'LL STOP BY YOUR HOTEL TO WISH YOU LUCK!

OH, DARLING, I'LL MAKE YOU SO PROUD OF ME. NOW... KISS ME GOOD-NIGHT.



BOB SPEED OFF.

HEY, HEY, SO BOTH MY ATHLETIC WOMEN WILL BE IN THE SAME TOWN AT THE SAME TIME. WELL... THIS OUGHT TO BE FUN. I'M LUCKY THAT "SMITH" IS A COMMON NAME. ANY AND JEAN WILL NEVER SUSPECT ANYTHING, AND IF I **WORK** IT RIGHT... NO ONE WILL BE THE WISER.

HEHE. SPRINGDALE PROBABLY HAS ONLY ONE MOTEL. THEY'LL BOTH BE THERE. YES, BUT THIS IS GOING TO BE FUN!

BUT THEN, HAVEN'T THE LAST THREE YEARS?



SPRINGDALE'S ONE HOTEL WAS A BUSTLE OF EXCITEMENT ON THE FIRST DAY OF TOURNAMENT WEEK. THE LOBBY WAS JAMMED...

SORRY, NO ROOMS. YOU HAVE A RESERVATION FOR ME... MRS. ROBERT SMITH? MRS. ROBERT SMITH? MRS. ROBERT SMITH? MRS. ROBERT SMITH?



BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. I'M MRS. ROBERT SMITH. HERE'S YOUR LETTER ACKNOWLEDGING MY RESERVATION...

OH, DEAR. THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE. OBVIOUSLY THERE ARE TWO MRS. ROBERT SMITHS. I SEE YOU'RE FROM GENTLE CITY. THE ONE THAT RESERVED THIS MORNING IS FROM LET'S SEE... LAKEVIEW.



LAKEVIEW? DID I HEAR SOMEONE MENTION LAKEVIEW? THAT'S MY...

OH, MRS. SMITH, I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE. THERE'S BEEN A TERRIBLE ERROR. LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MRS. ROBERT SMITH.

SEEMS WE HAVE THE SAME NAME, HONEY, AND THE SAME ROOM RESERVATION...

LADIES? I HAVE A BRILLIANT IDEA! WHY DON'T YOU TWO SHARE THE ROOM? I SEE THAT IT'S A DOUBLE.

WELL, MY HUSBAND IS COMING DOWN TO SEE ME PLAY.

SO'S MINE, BUT WE COULD DOUBLE UP UNTIL THEY STRAIGHTEN THIS mess OUT.



OH, YES! WE'LL
GET THINGS UP
THIS IS ALL
OUR FAULT.

O'GOD,
HONEY! MY
NAME'S
AMY!
WHAT'S
YOURS?

JEAN!
I
BOWLE...

I PLAY GOLF
ER... BOY!
TAKE THESE
BAGS TO
ROOM 204.

ISN'T IT A COIN-
CIDENCE... I MEAN
US HAVING THE
SAME MARRIED
NAME!

WELL, HONEY...
ROBERT SMITH
IS AN awfully
COMMON NAME!
IN HERE...

I GUESS SO.
MY BOB IS
A TRAVELING
SALESMAN...



HE'Y BOB'S MINE! I
HARDLY SEE HIM! ONLY
ONE WEEK A MONTH!

HERE, BOB! THANKS.
DID YOU SAY ONE WEEK
A MONTH? THAT'S
OUR ARRANGEMENT,
TOO!

I GUESS ALL TRAVELING
SALESMEN'S WIVES HAVE IT
AROUND. THAT'S WHY I
TOOK UP GOLF.

SAME HERE... WITH
MY BOWLING. IT GAVE
ME SOMETHING TO DO!
OH, I FORGOT...



MY HUSBAND GAVE ME THIS
PACKAGE. IT'S A SUR-
PRISE. I WAS SUPPOSED
TO OPEN IT WHEN I
GOT HOME...

THAT'S FUNNY! I
HAVE ONE, TOO! HERE!
SEE?

THE TWO GIRLS STRUGGLED WITH THEIR PACKAGES...
TEARING THEM OPEN FERVOROUSLY...

WHAT THE...?

GOOD LORD!



AMY STARED AT THE SHOES WITH THE ONE RUBBER SOLE AND THE ONE LEATHER ONE...

THESE... THESE ARE
BOWLING SHOES...



JEAN STARED AT HER GIFT... SHOES WITH METAL CLEATS...

AND... *THESE ARE*
GOLF SHOES.



THEN IT DAWNED UPON THEM. THEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER...

BUT... BUT
I PLAY GOLF!

AND I...
BOWL!



IN SILENCE THEY EACH RUMMAGED THROUGH THEIR SUITCASES, TOSING CLOTHES ASIDE.



AND WHEN THEY EACH FOUND WHAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR, THEY HELD THE TWO PHOTOGRAPHS UP... COMPARING THEM...



SO THEY WAITED FOR ROBERT TOGETHER...

WHAT THE... HELLO, COME IN
BOB! OUR HUSBAND!



THE NEXT MORNING, WHEN THE TOURNAMENT STARTED, THE JUDGES FOUND AMY ON THE FIRST GREEN OF THE GOLF COURSE, HER HAIR STRINGY, HER FACE PALE, SLEEPFULLY PRACTICING HER PUTTING...



Amy WAS USING ROBERT'S EYEGLASSES...

AND THEY FOUND JEAN AT THE ALLEYS WHEN THEY CAME TO OPEN THEM UP. SHE WAS PRACTICING HER BOWLING...



JEAN WAS USING ROBERT'S EYELESS HEAD.

HEH, HEH. AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY TODDIES IS DON'T BE A *MASHIE* AND *SPOON* WITH A *SHRINE* WIFE OR YOU'LL *STRIKE OUT* IN THE *LAST FRAME*. AND HOBBOY WILL TELL FOWL BECAUSE *ONE WIFE IS PAIR* FOR THE *COURSE*. SO IF YOU FEEL LIKE *PUNNING* YOURSELF DOWN, DON'T *SPELT* YOUR AFFECTION. *ONE BAR IS ENOUGH FOR ANY DUFFET!*

HEH, HEH! AND NOW THE *OLD WITCH* WANTS TO WIND UP MY TERROR-BAG. 'BYE, NOW. REMEMBER OLD *BOLPER'S* NEVER ON!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HELLO, HERE, IT'S YOUR DIETICIAN IN DISGUISE DRAMA. THE OLD WITCH, READY TO STIR UP ANOTHER STEAK-AND-EGG IN MY CAULDRON HERE IN THE MOUNT OF FEAR, TO COME IN, HODDIE, AND SIT DOWN BY THE FIRE. THIS TIME, MY MENU CONSISTS OF ANOTHER ADAPTION OF A TALE BY MY BOSS, BRADBURY. REVOLTING RAY, AS I AFFECTIONATELY CALL HIM. LISTEN TO RAY BRADBURY'S SUPERS...

THE HANDLER

MR. BENEDICT WALKED DOWN THE STEPS AND OUT THE GATE, WITHOUT ONCE LOOKING AT HIS LITTLE MORTUARY BUILDING. HE SAID THAT PLEASURE FOR LATER IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THINGS TOOK THE RIGHT PRECEDENCE. IT WOULDN'T PAY TO THINK WITH JOY OF THE BODIES AWAITING HIS TALENTS IN THE MORTUARY BUILDING, NO, IT WAS BETTER TO FOLLOW HIS USUAL DAY AFTER DAY ROUTINE. HE WOULD LET THE CONFLICT BEGIN...



MR. BENEDICT KNEW JUST WHEN TO GET HIMSELF ENGAGED. HE SPOKE WITH MR. RODGERS, THE DRUG DIST., AND HE SAVED AND PUT AWAY ALL THE SLURS AND INTORATIONS AND INSULTS.



MR. ROGERS ALWAYS HAD SOME TERRIBLE THING TO SAY ABOUT A MAN IN THE FURNAL PROFESSOR, AND OUTSIDE THE DRUG-STORE, MR. BENEDICT MET UP WITH MR. STUTTSBART, THE CONTRACTOR.

OH, HELLO, BENEDICT. HOW'S BUSINESS? ALL YER, YER? BET YOU'RE GOING AT IT **TOOTH AND NAIL**, DID YOU **BET** IT? I SAID **TOOTH AND NAIL**. AND NOW'S YOUR BUSINESS, MR. STUTTSBART?



AND ON IT WENT, PERIOD AFTER PERIOD.

SAY, HOW DO YOUR HANDS GET SO **COLD**? BENEDICT OLD MAN! THAT'S A **COLD SHAKE** YOU GOT THERE. YOU JUST GOT DONE EMBALMING A **FRIED WOMAN**? YER, THAT'S **HOT** SUD, YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID?

GOOD, GOOD? WELL...GOOD SAY?



MR. BENEDICT WAS THE LAKE INTO WHICH ALL REFUSE WAS THROWN. PEOPLE BEGAN WITH PEBBLES, AND WHEN MR. BENEDICT DID NOT RIPLE, THEY HEAVED A STONE... A BRICK... A BOULDER.

THERE YOU ARE, NEXT CHOPPER! NOW ARE ALL YOUR CORNED-BEEFS AND FISHED BRAINS?



THAT WAS MR. FLINGER, THE DELICATESSEN MAN. THERE WERE MORE, MANY MORE. THINGS WORKED TO A CRESCENDO. FINALLY, MR. BENEDICT TURNED WILDT AND RAN BACK THROUGH TOWN. HE WAS ALL READY NOW.

SOME BODY WASH! ON YOU, MR. BENEDICT? HEY? BET IF I SAID SOME **GOOF**.



THE AWFUL PART OF THE DAY WAS OVER. THE GOOD PART WAS NOW TO BEGIN! HE RAN EAGERLY UP THE STEPS OF HIS MORTUARY.



THE ROOM WAITED LIKE A FALL OF SNOW. THERE WERE WHITE HUMMOCKS AND PALE DELINEATIONS OF THINGS RECURRENT UNDER SHEETS IN THE DIMNESS. MR. BENEDICT PLUNGED OVER THE OODR.



HE WAS THE PUPPET-MASTER COME HOME.

HE STOOD FOR A LONG MINUTE IN THE VERY CENTER OF HIS THEATER, IN HIS HEAD APPLAUSE, PERHAPS. THUNDERED. THEN HE CAREFULLY REMOVED HIS COAT, GOT INTO A FRESH WHITE SMOKE, AND RUBBED HIS HANDS TOGETHER AS HE LOOKED AT HIS VERY GOOD FRIENDS.



HE WALKED ALONG THE SLEEPING ROWS OF SHEETED PEOPLE. IT HAD BEEN A FINE WEEK, THERE WERE ANY NUMBER OF FAMILY RELICS LYING THERE HE NOTED EACH NAME ON ITS WHITE CARD...

MRS. WALTERS, MR. SMITH, MISS BROWN, MR. ANDREWS, AH, GOOD AFTERNOON, ONE AND ALL!



MR. BENEDICT LIFTED A SHEET AS IF LOOKING FOR A CHILD UNDER A BED...

HOW ARE YOU TODAY, MRS. SHELLMUND? YOU'RE LOOKING *SPLENDID*, DEAR LADY!



MR. BENEDICT PULLED UP A CHAIR AND, REGARDING MRS. SHELLMUND THROUGH A MAGNIFYING GLASS...

MY DEAR MRS. SHELLMUND, DO YOU REALIZE, MY LADY, THAT YOU HAVE A *SEVERE* CONDITION OF THE *FORESKIN* DUE TO *GREASE* PIMPLES. A *RICH*, *RICH* DIET WAS YOUR TROUBLE. TOO MANY *PROSTERS* AND *SPONGIE* CAKES AND *CREAM* DANDIES. YOU ALWAYS *PRIDED* YOURSELF ON YOUR *BRAIN*, MRS. SHELLMUND...



BUT YOU *FEET* THAT WONDERFUL, PRICELESS BRAIN OF YOURS AFOUNT IN *PARAFATS* AND *FIZZES* AND *LIMEADES* AND *SOODAS* AND WERE SO VERY *SUPERIOR* TO ME THAT *NOW*, MRS. SHELLMUND, HERE IS WHAT *SHALL HAPPEN*...



MR. BENEDICT DID A *HEAT* OPERATION ON HER, CUTTING THE *SCALP* IN A *CIRCLE*, HE LIFTED IT OFF, THEN LIFTED OUT THE *BRAIN*. THEN HE PREPARED A *CAKE* CONFECTIONED LITTLE *SUGAR-BELLOWS* AND SQUORTED HER EMPTY HEAD FULL OF WHIPPED *CREAM* AND *CRYSTAL* *RESONANCE* STARS AND *PROLIPS*, IN *PINK*, *WHITE* AND *GREEN*, AND ON TOP HE PRINTED A *FINE* *PINK* *SCROLL*...



THEN HE PUT THE SKULL BACK ON AND SEWED IT IN PLACE AND HED THE MARKS WITH WAX AND POWDER AND WALKED ON TO THE NEXT TABLE...

GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. WREN, AND NOW IS THE *MASTER* OF *RACIAL* *HATREDS* TODAY *PURE*, *WHITE* *LAUNDERED* MR. WREN. *CLEAN* AS *SNOW*, *WHITE* AS *EGGS*. THE MAN WHO *HATED* *JEWS* AND *NEGEDES*. DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO *DO* TO YOU, MR. WREN? FIRST, LET US *DRAW* YOUR *BLOOD* FROM YOU, *INTOLERANT* *FRIENDS*!



THE BLOOD WAS *DRAWN* OFF.

NOW...THE *INJECTION* OF, YOU MIGHT SAY, *EMBALMING* *FLUID*.



MR. WREN, SNOW-WHITE, LINDY PURE, LAY WITH THE FLUID GOING IN HIM, MR. BENEDICT LAUGHED. MR. WREN TURNED BLACK. *BLACK AS DIRT! BLACK AS INK!*



THE SMALL MINE FLUID WAS... *JOKE!*

MR. BENEDICT SEVERED WORTH'S HEAD, PUT IT IN A COFFIN ON A SMALL PILLOW, FACING UP, THEN HE PLACED ONE HUNDRED NINETY POUNDS OF BRICKS IN THE COFFIN AND ARRANGED THEM TO LOOK LIKE A BODY IT WAS A FINE ILLUSION.



THE OTHER TWO CASKETS WERE FILLED WITH PEBBLES AND SHELLS AND BAVELS OF GINGHAM. IT WAS A FINE SERVICE, EVERYBODY CRIED...



THOSE THREE
INSEPARABLES, AT
LAST SEPARATED?

HEP,
HEP,

MR. BENEDICT MOVED ON

AND HELD TO YOU, EDWARD WORTH. WHAT A HANDSOME BODY YOU HAD, POWERFUL, WITH MUSCLES PINNED FROM HIDE BONE TO HIDE BONE, AND A CHEST LIKE A BOWLER. WOMEN GREW SPEECHLESS WHEN YOU WALKED BY... MEN STARED WITH ENVY? AND NOW, HERE YOU ARE...



SINCE IT WAS A GROWING AND POPULAR HABIT IN THE TOWN FOR PEOPLE TO BE BURIED WITH THE COFFIN LIDS CLOSED OVER THEM DURING THE SERVICE, THIS GAVE MR. BENEDICT GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO VENT HIS REPRESSIONS ON HIS RAPLESS GUESTS. HE HAD THE MOST UTTERLY WORTHLESS FUN WITH A GROUP OF OLD MAIDEN LADIES WHO WERE WASHED IN AN AUTO ON THEIR WAY TO AN AFTERNOON TEA. THEY WERE FAMOUS GOSSIPERS, ALWAYS WITH HEADS TOGETHER OVER SOME CHOICE BIT. AS IN LIFE, ALL THREE WERE CROWDED INTO ONE CASKET, HEADS TOGETHER IN ETERNAL FOLD-RETIFFED GOSSIP.



NOT LACKING FOR A SENSE OF JUSTICE, MR. BENEDICT BURIED ONE RICH MAN STARK NAKED.



A POOR MAN HE BURIED WOUND IN GOLD CLOTH, WITH FIVE DOLLAR GOLD PIECES FOR BUTTONS AND TWENTY DOLLAR GOLD COINS ON EACH EYELID.



A LANTERN HE DID NOT BURN AT ALL...
BUT BURNED MEN IN THE INCINERATOR...



HIS COFFIN CONTAINED NOTHING
BUT A MOLE-CAT, TRAPPED IN THE
WOODS ONE SUNDAY.



AN OLD MAN WAS THE VICTIM OF
A TERRIBLE DEVISE. UNDER THE
SILKEN COMFORTER, PARTS OF AN
OLD MAN HAD BEEN BURIED WITH
HER, THERE SHE LAY BEING MADE
COLD LOVE TO BY HIDDEN HANDS
AND THINGS. THE SHOOC
SHOWED ON HER FACE,
TOWE WHAT...



SO MR. BENEDICT MOVED FROM BODY TO BODY IN HIS
MORTUARY. THE FINAL BODY OF THE DAY WAS THE
BODY OF ONE MERRIWELL BLYTHE, AN ANCIENT MAN
AFFLICTED WITH SPILLS AND COMAS. MR. BLYTHE
HAD BEEN BROUGHT IN FOR DEAD SEVERAL TIMES,
BUT EACH TIME HE HAD REVIVED IN TIME TO PREVENT
PREMATURE BURIAL. MR. BENEDICT PULLED BACK
THE SHEET...



MR. BENEDICT FELL AGAINST THE SLAB, SUDDENLY
SHAKEN AND SICK...



THE OLD MAN ON THE SLAB SAILED, ROLLING HIS EYES
ABOUT IN HIS HEAD IN WHITE ORBITS...

"OH, YOU DARK DARK THING, YOU ANGEL THING, YOU
FIEND, YOU MONSTER, GET ME UP FROM HERE! I'LL
TELL THE MAYOR AND THE DOUGL AND EVERYONE,
OH, YOU DARK DARK THING! YOU DEFILER AND
SADIST, YOU PERVERTED SCOUNDREL... YOU
TERRIBLE MAN..."



THE OLD MAN SHRIEKED, FROTHING...

TO THINK THIS HAS GONE ON IN OUR TOWN...
ALL THESE YEARS AND WE NEVER JONER THE
THE THINGS YOU DID TO PEOPLE! OH YOU
MONSTROUS MONSTER, THE THINGS YOU
SAID! THE THINGS YOU DO!"



MR. BENEDICT REACHED FOR A HYPODERMIC...

MR. BENEDICT STABBED MR. BLYTHE IN THE ARM WITH THE NEEDLE. THE OLD MAN CRIED WILDLY TO ALL THE SHEETED FIGURES...

"YOU HELP ME!
YOU OUT THERE, UNDER
THE STONES, HELP
ME! LISTEN!"



THE OLD MAN FELL BACK. HE KNEW HE WAS DYING...

"ALL, LISTEN! WE'S DONE THIS
TO ME, AND YOU, AND YOU, ALL
OF YOU. HE'S DONE TOO MUCH,
TOO LONG. DON'T TAKE IT!
DON'T, DON'T LET HIM DO ANY
MORE TO ANYONE!"



MR. BENEDICT STOOD THERE...

"FACT CAN'T GO
ANYTHING TO ME,
AND NEITHER CAN
YOU!"

"OUT OF YOUR
GRAVE, HELP
ME! TONIGHT,
OR TOMORROW,
OR SOON. BUT
COME AND FLY
ME... THIS
HORRIBLE
MAN!"



THE OLD MAN RAVED ON AND ON, GETTING WEAKER. THE ROOM WAS SUDDENLY VERY DARK. IT WAS NIGHT. IT WAS GETTING LATE. FINALLY, SMILING, THE OLD MAN WHISPERED...

"THEY'VE TAKEN A LOT FROM YOU, HORRIBLE MAN.
TONIGHT, THEY'LL... DO... SOMETHING."



...AND THEN, THE OLD MAN DIED...

PEOPLE SAY THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION THAT NIGHT. IN THE GRAVEYARD, OR RATHER A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS, A SMELL OF STRANGE THINGS, A MOVEMENT, A VIOLENCE, A RAINING, STONES TOPPLED AND THINGS SWORE OATHS...



...AND THERE WAS A CHAOS AND A SCREAMING, AND MANY SHADOWS, MOVING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE MORTUARY BUILDING IN SWIFT JERKS AND SHAMBLES. WINDOWS BROKE. DOORS WERE TORN FROM HINGES, LEAVES FROM TREES. IRON GATES CLATTERED...



...AND IN THE END, THERE WAS MR. BENEDICT RUNNING ABOUT, RUNNING ABOUT, YAWNING, AND A TORTURED SCREAM THAT COULD ONLY BE MR. BENEDICT HIMSELF...



AFTER THAT, NOTHING QUITE...

THE TOWN PEOPLE ENTERED THE MORTUARY THE NEXT MORNING. THEY SEARCHED THE MORTUARY BUILDING AND THEN WENT OUT INTO THE GRAVEYARD, AND THEY FOUND NOTHING BUT BLOOD, A VAST QUANTITY OF BLOOD, SPRINKLED AND THROWN AND SPREAD EVERYWHERE YOU COULD POSSIBLY LOOK, AS IF THE HEAVENS HAD BLEED PROFOUNDLY IN THE NIGHT...



WHERE COULD HE BE?

HOW SHOULD WE KNOW?

WALKING THROUGH THE GRAVEYARD, THEY STOOD IN DEEP TREE SHADES WHERE STONES, ROW ON ROW, WERE OLD AND TIME-ERASED AND LEANING. NO BIRDS SANG. THEY STOPPED BY ONE TOMBSTONE...



HERE, NOW! LOOK AT THIS...

FRESHLY SCRATCHED, AS IF BY FEEBLY FRANTIC, NASTY FINGERS IN THE GREYISH, MOSS-FLECKED STONE WAS THE NAME: MR. BENEDICT...



GOOD LORD!

LOOK... OVER HERE, THIS ONE TOO... AND THIS ONE AND THIS ONE...

A VILLAGER POINTED TO THE OTHER GRAVESTONES, UPON EACH AND EVERY STONE, SCRATCHED BY FINGER-NAIL SCRATCHINGS, THE SAME MESSAGE APPEARED: MR. BENEDICT... BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!



THE TOWN PEOPLE WERE STUNNED... HE... HE COULDN'T BE BURIED UNDER ALL THESE GRAVESTONES!



THEY STOOD THERE FOR ONE LONG MOMENT. INSTINCTIVELY THEY ALL LOOKED AT ONE ANOTHER NERVOUSLY IN THE SILENCE AND THE TREE DARKNESS. THEY ALL WHISPERED FOR AN INSTANT WITH FUMBLING, SENSELESS LIPS. ONE OF THEM REPLIED, SIMPLY:



COULDN'T HE?

WELL, YES! SO, THAT'S THE *DISH, DRAPE, HARE* YOU FOUND IT A TASTY TALE. THIS BOY BRADBURY HAD WRITTEN AN IMMORTALITY, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? WELL, THAT ABOUT WINDS UP THE GHOST-KEEPER'S MAG, I'LL JUST POUR SOME BLOOD ON THE FIRE



UNDER MY CHILDREN, LAP UP THE LAST TRACE OF THIS ISSUE'S CULINARY CONCOCTION, AND GET READY FOR MY NEXT HORROR HELPING, WHICH WILL BE IN THE GHOST-KEEPER'S MAG, THE BUILT OF HORROR! 'BYE, NOW'

This 15" tall
SILVER TROPHY
LASTS FOR 1000 HRS
30 MINUTES
OF FUN
A DAY

When I arrived I was in company, about twenty-five, but very few were up. "Well?" "Nope," I learned after a short time. "More people than last night," I was assured by some of the pleasure boys. But before I did more I saw one other party leave. I had nothing to do so I left. It was about eight o'clock when the Jewish dancing party was the last to be seen. I was surprised, then I got changed and was surprised that many

Peter Dinklage

The report stated that the company's domestic sales were expected to be around \$1.5 billion.



ROGER HIRSCH
was a 102 lb. 4th. WEAVER.
Look at him NOW—
A MOVIE-STAR BE-BOP

as **YOU**
can be
seen

YES! You'll see INCH upon INCH of MIGHTY MUSCLE added to your ARMS. Your CHEST deepened. Your BACK AND SHOULDERS broadened. Pains faded. SINCERELY POWERFUL. SINCERELY YOURS. You'll become an ALL-Around, ALL-American MAN. A Winner in everything you tackle—or my Training won't cost you one cent.

Develop YOUR 520 MUSCLES
Gain Pounds, INCHES, FAST!

**I GAINED
53 LBS. OF SHAPELY
POWER-PACKED
MUSCLES**

Which of these
2 ME'S ?
is YOU ?
THAT 112 LB.-6 FT.
SPINDLE-ARMED **SISSY** WAS HE
A FEW SHORT WEEKS AGO

THIS MAY BE
YOUR LAST
CHANCE
TO GET FOR
ALL 5 **10¢**
PICTURE
TALKING COPIES.
MILLIONS HAVE
BEEN SOLD FOR
25¢ AND MORE

NO! friend you
don't have to be
SKINNY any more
just mail **NOW**
the **FREE**
coupon below
as I did. Soon
YOU can add

6½ inches to your CHEST
3 inches to each ARM 

FREE

**Come on, PAL, NOW
YOU GIVE ME
10 PLEASANT MINUTES A
DAY IN YOUR HOME...AND I'LL GIVE
YOU A NEW HE-MAN BODY
For Your OLD SKELETON FRAME.**

NO! I don't care how closely it fits you are, if you're a brownie, at your 20's or 30's or more; if you're short or tall, or obese work you do. All I want is YOU! In addition, interested in your home to ASK! You can by the SAME METHOD I found myself from a friend in a Chemistry of Chemistry.



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NO. 40
MARCH



TALES

FROM THE

CRYPT



10¢

®

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



JOHN DAVIS



GADZOOKS!
MY JOY KNOWS
NO BOUNDS! I
HAVE JUST RECEIVED
MY **E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB** MEMBERSHIP
KIT WHICH INCLUDES
A FULL COLOR
7½X10½ ILLUMINATED
CERTIFICATE, A STURDY
WALLET IDENTIFICATION
CARD, AN ATTRACTIVE
EMBROIDERED
SHOULDER PATCH,
AND A STUNNING
ANTIQUE BRONZE-
FINISH BAS-
RELIEF PIN. SO
WHAT!

SO WHAT? SO YOU, TOO, CAN JOIN THE **E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!**

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 25¢. IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WISH TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS, ALONG WITH 25¢ FOR EACH NAME, AND INDICATE THE NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER. EVERY MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY... BY RETURN MAIL.

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 706
225 LAFAVETTE STREET
NEW YORK 12, N.Y.

SO, ALL RIGHT! SO HERE'S MY TWO BITS. SO MAKE ME A MEMBER, ALREADY, AND SEND ME THE THINGS AND STUFF LIKE WHAT THE KID UP THERE GOT... SO!

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY ZONE NO.

STATE

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEY, HEY! I SEE YOU'RE HUNGRY FOR HORROR AGAIN. WELL, REST ASSURED... YOUR APPETITE WILL BE SATISFIED. IN FACT, WHEN YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THIS PUTRID PERIODICAL, YOU WILL HAVE LOST YOUR APPETITE ENTIRELY. SO DON'T JUST STAND THERE GROOGLING. COME IN! WELCOME ONCE MORE TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR. THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, YOUR NAUSEATING NARRATOR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO CRAWL YOUR SPINE AND CIRCLE YOUR BLOOD WITH THE SPINE-TINGLING TALE OF TERROR I CALL...

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



THE EVENING PERFORMANCE IS OVER AND THE CIRCUS GROUNDS ARE SILENT SAVE FOR THE FLAPPING OF CANVASES AND THE OCCASIONAL SCREECH OF A GAZED ANIMAL. OVERHEAD, A COLD MOON ILLUMINATES THE MIDWINTER LANDSCAPE. SUDDENLY, A SHADY FIGURE EMERGES FROM ONE OF THE DARKENED TENTS AND GLIDES QUIETLY ACROSS THE MOWS, WHISPERING...

STICH

HERE, MARTA...



THE WOMAN PEERS INTO THE SHADOWS, STRAINING TO SEE, HER HEART RACING. THE MAN STEPS INTO THE DIM COLD LIGHT, HIS ARMS EXTENDED.

OH, ERIC, DARLING.

MY DEAREST...



THEY EMBRACE... NEARLY... PASSIONATELY. HUNGRY LIPS... HOLDING CLOSE...

WHAT ABOUT CARL?

HE IS ASLEEP. HE DREAMS OF PARIS AND THE WOMAN HE HAS KNOWN...



THE MAN LOOKS INTO THE WOMAN'S EYES, GRAY-GREEN IN THE MOONLIGHT.

BUT... YOU SAID YOU CAN ONLY READ THE THOUGHTS IN HIS MIND HE WANTS YOU TO READ!

HE FADING? NO, ERIC, HE HAS ALWAYS TALKED ME WITH THE POWER HE HAS OVER ME!



THE MAN SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY, STROKING THE WOMAN'S SOFT FLOWING HAIR...

WHY DID YOU EVER MARRY HIM, MARTA?

IT WAS A MISTAKE, ERIC. I MISTOOK THIS FEAR OF NATURE... THIS ONCE IN A LIFETIME OCCURRENCE... THIS ABILITY OF CARL'S TO PROJECT THOUGHTS AND MINE TO READ THEM... FOR LOVE!



WE DISCOVERED THIS ABILITY QUITE BY ACCIDENT MANY YEARS AGO. CARL IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED ITS GREAT VALUE. BEFORE I KNEW IT, WE'D TEAMED UP AS A MIND-READING ACT, JOINED THIS TRAVELING CIRCUS, AND WERE MARRIED...

AND YOU'VE BEEN UNHAPPY EVER SINCE.



MISERABLE! I KNOW NOW THAT CARL NEVER LOVED ME. I WAS HIS SUBJECT... HIS THOUGHT-PROJECTION RECEIVER... A MERE OF APPARATUS... NOTHING MORE. BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT REAL LOVE IS... NOW THAT I'VE MET YOU.

HE WOULD NEVER LET YOU GO, WOULD HE?



NEVER! IF I DO, HIS ACT WOULD BE OVER. HE'D NEVER GIVE ME A DIVORCE. THERE'S NO USE MY ASKING!

THEN WE WILL, FOR ARA... JOIN ANOTHER CIRCUS. I HAVE HAD MANY OFFERS. AN ANIMAL TRAINER IS IN GREAT DEMAND.



THE WIND RIPS ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS... WHISPERS AROUND THE TENT ROPES, SASSY AGAINST THE CANVAS... CARRYING THE SIGNS, THE WHISPERS, THE SASS OF THE LOVERS IN THE SHADOWS, AND IN HIS TENT, CARL STIRS UNEASILY... OPENS HIS EYES...

MARTA...
MARTA? MARTA?

HER BED? IT IS EMPTY!
WHERE COULD SHE BE?



CARL SLIPS ON A ROSE AND COMES OUT OF HIS TENT... OUT INTO THE WHISPERS, SIGHING, GASPING WIND

VOICES? COMING FROM
BEYOND THE NEW ANIMAL
TRAINER'S TENT...

HIS VOICE... AND
MARTA'S?



CARL MOVES THROUGH THE MOON-
LIT NIGHT, HIS EYES BURNING LIKE
HOT COALS... LISTENING...

...AND AT THE END OF
THE MOUTH WHEN I GET
MY CHECK, WE WILL
LEAVE... FOR AND
I... TOGETHER...

OH,
YES...
YES...



...LISTENING TO THE LASERWREN IN
HIS WIFE'S VOICE, THE PUSION, THE
RINGER...

BUT LET'S NOT
TALK ANYMORE.
ERIC, DARLING.
HOLD ME CLOSE...

SWEET
MARTA...



...AND THEN, SLOWLY, HE RETURNS
TO HIS TENT ONCE MORE. HE HAS
HEARD ENOUGH...

SHE... SHE HAS FALLEN
IN LOVE WITH HIM. SHE
IS LEAVING ME. SHE...
I... I MUST STOP HER!

BUT,
NOW...



THE MOONLIGHT STREAMS THROUGH THE OPEN TENT-
FLAP... FALLING ACROSS THE PRINT... BLACK LETTERS ON
COLD WHITE... THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER...

WHAT'S THIS? "RODNEY DUBIN-
TERRED AT LOCAL GRAVE YARD...
TORN TO PIECES AS IF ATTACKED
BY WILD BEAST!"



OF COURSE? "TORN TO PIECES BY WILDBEAST"
THAT'S HOW I CAN STOP HER FROM LEAVING.
THAT'S IT!



LATER, WHEN MARTA RETURNS FROM HER RENDEZVOUS, AND CRABLES BACK INTO BED, CARL PRETENDS HE IS ASLEEP.



ONLY AFTER MARTA HAS SLIPPED OFF INTO DEEP SLEEPER, DOES CARL STIR... AND RISE... AND SO OUT OF THE TENT.



... AND CROSS DIRECTLY TO THE NEW ANIMAL TRAINER'S TENT WITH GUN IN HAND.



WHO? WHO'S THERE? WHO.

SET UP! AND DON'T MAKE A SOUND!

ERIC STUMBLER TO HIS FEET...

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, CARL? PUT DOWN THAT GUN.



SO YOU WERE GOING TO RUN OFF WITH MY WIFE, OH, ERIC? WELL, WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT! MOVE!

CARL MOTIONS ERIC OUT OF THE TENT AND DOWN THE LONG SILENT MIDWAY TOWARD THE BIG TOP.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, CARL?

I, ERIC, I'M NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING! YOUR LION WILL DO THE WORK!



THEY CROSS THE TANNARK FLOOR OF THE BIG TOP UNTIL THEY COME TO THE LION CAGE. THE TANNY BEAST PAGES BACK AND FORTH HUNGRILY.



MY LION??

YES, ERIC, I'M GOING TO PUT YOU IN THE CAGE WITH HIM... WITHOUT YOUR WHOP! WITHOUT ANYTHING... JUST YOU AND YOUR LION!

WITHOUT MY WHOP? I'D BE HELPLESS, PARALYZED... UNABLE TO DEFEND MYSELF! FOR GOD'S SAKE, CARL! HAVE PITY!

PITY IS AN EMOTION BELONGING TO THE PITIFUL ERIC. SET IN.



CARL SWINGS OPEN THE BARRIED DOOR AND PUSHES ERIC SCREAMING AND GOES SPRAWLING. THE LION SNARLS...



...AND THEN, THE CIRCUS SPONGES ECHO WITH THE BLOOD-CURLING SHRIEKS OF A MAN BEING TORN TO SHREDS BY THE RAZOR SHARP FANGS OF A BLOOD-THIRSTY BEAST...



ERIC'S ANGUISHED SHRIEKS ANKLE MARTA AND SHE LOOKS AROUND HILT...

CARL! WHAT WAS THAT? CARL! CA...



CARL'S BED IS EMPTY! OUTSIDE THE TENT, FOOTSTEPS POUND UP THE HIGHWAY TOWARD THE BIG-ICE MARTA SLIPS ON A ROSE AND BURSTS FROM THE TENT...

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S GOING ON? DON'T KNOW! IT'S COMING FROM THE BIG-TOP!



SHE RUNS WITH THE REST OF THEM... UNTIL THEY COME TO THE LION TRAINER'S CAGE...



GOOD LORD!

ERIC! ERIC!

SHE SCREAMS HIS NAME TWICE, AND THEN SHE JUST STANDS THERE, WATCHING THE BEAST LICK AT THE BLAMED AND MURDERED BODY UNTIL SHE HAS TO TURN AWAY AS THE MASSES SWEEP OVER HER...

HOW DID IT HAPPEN? THE CRAZY FOOL? HE MUST HAVE COME OUT HERE TO PRACTICE HIS ACT! AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT? CRIES



AND THEN, SICK, SHE RETURNS TO HER TENT AND SITS AND WAITS, CRYING, UNTIL CARL COMES IN WITH THAT EVIL GRIN ON HIS COLD IMPASSIVE FACE...



YOU DID IT, DIDN'T YOU? YOU KILLED HIM! YOU KNEW!

DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT THEY SAID, MARTA? THEY SAID HE MUST HAVE BEEN PRACTICING HIS ACT!

BUT THERE IS NO SOFT IN MARTA'S MIND AS TO HOW ERIC DIED. CARL'S BED WAS EMPTY WHEN ERIC'S CORPSE ARRIVED HER. THE SHEETS WERE GOLD.

"I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!"

"YOU WILL GET OVER IT, MARTA!"



THE NEXT DAY'S PERFORMANCE IS CANCELLED BECAUSE OF THE TRAGEDY. THE TENTS ARE LOWERED. THE CIRCUS PREPARES TO MOVE ON.

"LOOK OUT! CARL!"



IT HAPPENS SUDDENLY... WITHOUT WARNING. CARL IS HELPING WITH THE DISMANTLING OF THE BIG-TOP WHEN THE MAIN SUPPORT TOPPLES...

"GOOD LORD!"



THE HEAVY POLE CRASHES DOWNWARD UPON CARL, CRUSHING HIM BENEATH ITS MASSIVE WEIGHT.



AND WHEN THE HUGE SUPPORT IS LIFTED, CARL LIES DEADLY STILL. HIS GLAZED EYES STARE...



"HEL... HE'S DEAD?"

"TWO IN A ROW! THE CIRCUS IS JUNKED!"

"SOMEBODY GET HIS WIFE!"

MARTA IS SUMMONED. SHE STANDS IMPASSIVELY OVER HER HUSBAND'S BODY, SHEDDING NO TEARS, SHOWING NO SIGN OF EMOTION...



"IT... IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, MARTA! THE MAIN SUPPORT."

"HE... HE WILL HAVE TO BE BURIED BEFORE WE CAN GO ON!"

MARTA'S VOICE IS COLD... CALLOUS, AS SHE SAYS...



"SOMEBODY SEND FOR AN UNDERTAKER..."

MARTA LOOKS DOWN AT THE STILL FORM OF HER HUSBAND LYING ON THE TARBARE FLOOR. AND EVEN THOUGH SHE READS HIS THOUGHTS, SHE SHOWS NO SIGNS OF RECOGNITION...

MARTA! MARTA, I AM ALIVE! I'M NOT DEAD! MARTA! LISTEN TO ME! PLEASE! TRY TO HEAR WHAT I AM THINKING! I'M PARALYZED, MARTA! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M PARALYZED! I CAN SEE! I CAN HEAR! I CAN'T MOVE!



AS THE UNDERTAKER AND HIS ASSISTANT LIFT POOR CARL INTO THE WICKER, MARTA MOVES FORWARD...

MARTA! PLEASE! SAVE ME! I'M ALIVE! MARTA! I'M ALIVE! PARALYZED! NOT DEAD! PARALYZED! MARTA! PLEASE...



OH, MARTA! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

YES, MA'AM!



PLEASE DON'T EMBALM HIM, BURY HIM AS HE IS. HE WOULD HAVE WANTED IT THAT WAY!

ANYTHING YOU SAY, MA'AM!

MARTA! MARTA, NOT!



MARTA LOOKS DOWN INTO PARALYZED EYES THAT CAN STILL SEE... WHISPERS INTO PARALYZED EARS THAT CAN STILL HEAR...

MARTA! OH, GOOD! MARTA...



AT THE FUNERAL, MARTA STANDS, HER FACE A GRANITE MASK, BEHIND THE YAWNING PIT BELOW CARL'S COFFIN...

YOU CAN STOP THIS, MARTA! THERE'S STILL TIME. I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME. I KNOW IT! PLEASE! I BEG OF YOU! DON'T LET THEM BURY ME ALIVE!

LOWER THE COFFIN!



AND EVEN THOUGH THE SOIL IS SHOVELED DOWN UPON THE COFFIN, CARL'S FRANTIC THOUGHT NEVER STILL COME THROUGH TO HER... TO HER AND ONLY HER... TO MARTA, WHO TURNS AND WALKS AWAY DOWN THE PATH LEADING OUT OF THE CEMETERY...

MARTA! DON'T DO THIS! PLEASE! SAVE ME! PLEASE! OH, LORD... MAKE HER SAVE ME!



THE AFTERNOON WINDS? THE NIGHT BREEDS COMES UP, WHISPERING OVER THE GRAVE MOUNDS. SIX FEET BELOW, IN HIS COFFIN, CARL GONCOTRATES AS THE PRECIOUS OXYGEN SLOWLY DISAPPEARS.

MARTA? COME BACK! COME SAVE ME!
I'LL DO ANYTHING! ANYTHING! HAVE
PITY ON ME! HAVE PITY!



THE STARS COME OUT, WHITE PIN-POINTS IN A VELVET SHROUD. A FIGURE MOVED OVER THE GRAVE MOUNDS.

I KNOW YOU ARE RECEIVING
MY THOUGHTS, MARTA? I KNOW.



A SHOVEL DIPS INTO THE SOFT EARTH.

MARTA?
MARTA,
YOU DID
COME! YOU
DID!



THE DIGGING CONTINUES, THE SHOVEL SCOOPING AWAY THE SOFT EARTH. FINALLY THE LID OF THE COFFIN SWINGS BACK.

MARTA? DARLING? I...
OH, LORD... YOU'RE
NOT MARTA!



AND THEN AS CARL LIES HELPLESS...PARALYZED...LIKE A LION-TAMER WITHOUT A WHIP...FEELING THE MAJOR SHARP TEETH RIPPING AND TEARING AT HIS FLESH...UNABLE TO SCREAM AT THE EXCRUCATING PAIN, HE THINKS OF THE NEWSPAPER LYING IN THE MOONLIGHT...THE NEWSPAPER THAT FIRST GAVE HIM THE IDEA OF HOW TO KILL ERIC.

'BODIES DISINTERRED AT LOCAL GRAVE YARD...
FOUN TO PIECES AS IF ATTACKED BY SOME
WILD BEAST!' OH, LORD! THEY WERE WRONG!
THIS IS NO BEAST! IT'S A GHOUL!



YEH, YEH? YEP, KIDDIES! CARL
ENDED UP JUST LIKE ERIC...
BEING TORN TO BITS AND
UNABLE TO DEFEND HIMSELF.
AS FOR MARTA...SHE READ CARL'S
FINAL THOUGHTS, AND GOT
QUITE A MENIAL PICTURE
OF WHAT WAS GOING ON! JUST
ONE MORE THOUGHT ON THIS
WHOLE SUBJECT AS THE BOP

CEMETERY FORT-
MAN KEEPS TELLING
HIS MOON CREW,
'ONE THAT CAN GET
GRAVES'
WELL, YIK
AMRITS, SO...
'WYE, NOW!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELCOME! SALUTATIONS, SLIME SAVOYERS!! NOW IT'S TIME FOR A JAUNT INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR. THIS IS YOUR HOST IN NOWHES, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU IN C.K.'S MAD WITH A FAVORITE TELL-TALE FROM MY CREEP-COLLECTION. SO HAVE THE SIGARETTE READY AND I'LL UPSET YOUR STOMACH WITH THE TUMMY-TURNER I CALL...

PEARLY TO DEAD

OUR STORY BEGINS DURING WORLD WAR II, WHEN THE UNITED STATES MARINES WERE SLOWLY AND PAINFULLY INCHING ACROSS THE SOUTH PACIFIC AREA, INCHING AND BATTLING FOR EACH BLOODY ATOLL, EACH JAPANESE-IMPOSTED CORAL ROCK. ONE HOT BLACK STARLESS NIGHT, A SMALL BOAT MOVED SILENTLY TOWARD THE CORAL REEF THAT RIMMED THE PEACEFUL LAGOON OF ONE OF THESE JAPANESE-HELD ISLANDS. INSIDE, TWO MEN CROUCHED QUIETLY, STUDYING THE DANCING FIRES ON THE SHORE ACROSS THE PLACID LAGOON...

BETTER DROP THE ANCHOR, PHIL. THIS IS ABOUT AS CLOSE IN AS WE CAN GET WITHOUT BEING SEEN.

RIGHT, LARRY.



THE ANCHOR RAN OVER THE SMALL BOAT'S SIDE AND DROPPED WITH A BUZZLED SPLASH INTO THE BLACK PACIFIC. THEN, STRANGLY, THE TWO MEN BEGAN TO UNDOSS...

WHILE I'M CLEARING THE STEEL NETTING, YOU START SETTING THE DEMOLITION CHARGES, PHIL.

CHECK?



THEY STOOD ALMOST NAKED IN THE PACIFIC NIGHT, MUSCLES RIMMING. THEY BENT AND SLID THE WEIRDLY SHAPED BLACK RUBBER FLIPPERS ONTO THEIR FEET... PULLED THEIR RUBBER MASKS WITH THE ROUND GLASS WINDOWS OVER THEIR FACES...



READY? GOT THE CHARGES... JIMERS... FUSES?

RIGHT? GOT YOUR WIRE CLIPPERS... UNDERWATER LAMP... JACK-SAM?

SILENTLY, THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY'S UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAM... THE FABULOUS PROSWEN... SLID OVER THE SIDE OF THEIR SMALL BOAT AND INTO THE CHOPPY PACIFIC.



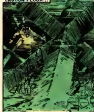
WELL, TAKE IT EASY, PHIL!

SEE YOU IN A WHILE, LARRY!

...AND WENT ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS. ...THE BUSINESS OF CLEARING THE WAY FOR THE INVASION OF THE FOLLOWING MORNING. THE ONE NAMED LARRY SLID DOWNWARD, FLICKING ON HIS LAMP, SEARCHING OUT THE TREACHEROUS PROPELLER SHATTERING STEEL NETTING...



...AS THE OTHER, THE ONE NAMED PHIL, SKIMMED BELOW THE SURFACE TO THE PILING BUNK IN THE LAGOON FLOOR...



WITH THE NETTING CLIPPED AND SAVED AND OUT AWAY AND RENDERED HARMLESS, LARRY SHOT TOWARDS PHIL TO HELP PLACE THE DEMOLITION CHARGES, HIS LANTERN BEAM RUNNING ACROSS THE SANDY BOTTOM OF THE LAGOON...



AND THEN, SUDDENLY, HE SAW IT... STRETCHING AWAY BELOW HIM IN THE GLOOMY MURKY DARKNESS... THE CYCLES BED...



AS LARRY CIRCLED OVER THE BED, STUDYING THE ABNORMALLY-LARGE SHELLED SEA CREATURES WITH THEIR PRICELESS-GLOBED GEMS IMBEDDED IN THEIR QUIVERING MEATY BODIES, PHIL SLID TOWARD HIM, STARING WIDE-EYED.



THE TWO MEN SURFACED BESIDE THEIR BOAT, GASPING FOR BREATH...



DID YOU SEE IT, PHIL? THERE, BARR... THERE MUST BE A FORTUNE IN PEARLS IN THAT OYSTER BOAT I'M COME BACK... BARR... DOWN...

DON'T BE A FOOL, LARRY! I'VE SET THE CHARGES. C'MON! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

MOMENTS LATER, THE SMALL BOAT WAS HUNTING SEAWARD. BEHIND, THE DEMOLITION CHARGES EXPLODED IN THE PLACID LAGOON SIGNALING THE NIGHTY BATTLE RAGING OFFSHORE TO BEGIN THEIR BARRAGE. LARRY SWORE AGAIN THE DIN...



WE'LL COME BACK, PHIL! AFTER THIS CRAZY MISS IS OVER, WE'LL COME BACK FOR THOSE PEARLS. WE'LL BE BACK!

SURE, LARRY! SURE...

AT DAWN THE NEXT MORNING, THE ASSAULT BOATS STORMED THE QUIET LAGOON, AND PROPELLERS TURNED BLOOD INTO THE WATERS ABOVE THE OYSTER BED...



THE BEACHHEAD WAS SECURED. THE DEMOLITION TEAM'S WORK WAS DONE. LARRY AND PHIL WERE SHIPPED ELSEWHERE TO OTHER ISLANDS, WITH OTHER LAGOONS...



THEY SAY THIS ATOM BOMB WIPED OUT A WHOLE CITY, PHIL. WARE THE JAP'LL SURRENDER NOW THEN...

C'MON! STOP DREAMIN' ABOUT THOSE PEARLS! NOW GET READY!

V-J DAY! PEACE! IT CAME SOO-DEMY... AFTER THE SECOND A-BOMB WAS DROPPED, THE JAPANESE SIGNED AN UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER, AND THE WAR WAS OVER...



HEY, PHIL! SHIPPING ORDERS? WE'RE GOING HOME! WE'RE GETTING OUT!

LET'S SEE...

SAN FRANCISCO'S GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE CAME UP OUT OF THE MIST ONE MORNING. THE TROOPSHIP SLIPPED BENEATH IT AND HOBLED IN TOWARDS A PIER WHERE BANDS PLAYED AND CHILDREN CHEERED AND WOMEN BOBBED HAPPILY.



LOOK, PHIL! THERE'S GLADYS!

GLADYS? WHERE?

THEY CAME DOWN THE GANGPLANK TOGETHER, SIDE BY SIDE, LARRY AND PHIL. BUT THE GIRL THAT WAITED WITH TEAR-STAINED CHEEKS HAD EYES FOR ONLY ONE OF THEM



PHIL, D'ARLING...

GLADYS—BABY...

HEY... WHERE DOES AN ALIEN GO TO REGISTER?

LARRY TRIED TO HIDE THE JEALOUS ANGER... THE HURT THAT HE FELT. GLADY'S PREFERENCE HAD COME AS A GREAT SHOCK TO HIM...

"I... I WANTED TO TELL YOU, LARRY! BUT... WELL... I..."

"I UNDERSTAND, GLADY."

PHIL HAD WON AGAIN. IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT... EVER SINCE THEIR COLLEGE DAYS. THEY'D BOTH COME OUT FOR THE SWIM TEAM...

"THAT'S GOOD TIME, SON! EN... WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS?"

"LARRY! LARRY MILES!"

LARRY'D DONE HIS BEST, BUT PHIL... PHIL HAD DONE JUST A LITTLE BIT BETTER.

"CONGRATULATE A TON, BOY! THAT BEATS MILES'S TIME BY EIGHT FEET!"

"THE NAME'S PHIL CANNON, COACH!"

LARRY AND PHIL HAD BECOME FAST FRIENDS IN COLLEGE, BUT THERE WAS ALWAYS THAT RIVALRY BETWEEN THEM...

"COME ON, LARRY!"

"LET'S GO, PHIL!"

"MILES IS GREAT, AND CANNON IS BETTER. WE'VE BOTH WON SWIM TEAM THIS YEAR."

...NOT ONLY IN THE POOL... BUT ALSO ON THE CAMPUS.

"HEY, YOU TWO! I WANT YOU TO MEET GLADY HARDY! GLADY, MEET OUR TWO SWIM CHAMPS, LARRY MILES AND PHIL CANNON."

"HI! VERY NICE! ARE YOU BUSY TONIGHT, MISS HARDY?"

"SORRY, LARRY! MISS HARDY ALREADY HAS A DATE WITH ME!"

When GLADY'S HAD COME INTO THEIR LIVES, THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO BOYS HAD INCREASED. THEY'D BOTH FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HER...

"GLADY, YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU! SAY 'YES'! AND I'LL BUY YOU THE BIGGEST ENGAGEMENT RING IN THE STORE..."

"LARRY! I... I LIKE YOU... BUT... WELL, I JUST CAN'T TAKE UP MY MIND!"

THEN, PEARL HARBOR, AND THE U.S. WAS IN A WAR. THE NAVY HAD COME TO LARRY AND PHIL... ASKED THEM TO JOIN THE UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAM... AND THEY'D ACCEPTED...

"TO LONG, BABY!"

"BYE!"

"I WILL! GOOD-BYE, BOYS! TAKE CARE!"

AND NOW THEY WERE BACK FROM THE WAR, STANDING ON A JAMMED PIER FULL OF RETURNED SAILORS AND SOLDIERS AND HAPPY LOVED ONES, AND PHIL HAD WON AGAIN...



"WE'RE... WE'RE GOING TO BE MARRIED, LARRY!"

"HAIEN, PHIL! I MEAN, WHAT ABOUT OUR SUZANNE OUT THERE... IN THE PACIFIC?"

"IT'LL BE A LONELY PLACE TO TAKE GLADYS ON OUR HONEYMOON, I AM NOT."



"OH, SURE! SURE! WELL, CONGRATULATIONS, YOU TWO!"

DISCHARGE! CIVILIAN CLOTHES AGAIN! FREEDOM FROM REGIMENTATION... DISCIPLINE! THEY WERE ALL LARRY'S NOW. AND A SECRET, 300,000 A MILLION DOLLAR SECRET! JUST ONE THING. ONE THING WASN'T BETTER! GLADYS!



"I PICKED UP THREE SURPLUS FLIPPERS AND MASKS, PHIL. I THOUGHT WE'D TRY THEM OUT TONIGHT."

"LOOK, FELLER! I'M GETTING MARRIED TOMORROW! HAVE A HEART!"

LARRY CONVINCED PHIL THAT AFTER HE WAS MARRIED THERE'D BE NO CHANCE TO TRY OUT THEIR EQUIPMENT, AND PHIL RELUCTANTLY AGREED. THEY DROVE OUT TO A LONELY BEACH...



"I PICKED THIS SPOT BECAUSE IT'S SO MUCH LIKE THAT LARSON, PHIL!"

"YEAH! IT... IT IS! WELL! LET'S GO!"

LARRY HAD PLANNED IT ALL SO CAREFULLY! WITH PHIL DEAD, GLADYS... THE SECRET OF THE PEARLS... EVERYTHING... WOULD BE HIS...



"LARRY! WHAT THE...?"

"IT'S GOING TO BE SUCH A FINE PHIL... A GOOD SWIMMER LIKE YOU... DROWNING!"

THEY STRUGGLED WILDLY, THERE IN THE FOAMING SURF OF THAT LONELY CALIFORNIA BEACH. LARRY HELD PHIL'S THROAT IN A VICE-LIKE GRASP, UNTIL PHIL'S BODY WENT LIMF AND LIFE LEFT IT AND IT SLIPPED FROM LARRY'S GRASP AND SANK BENEATH THE OCEAN WAVES...



AND LARRY CAME OUT OF THE WATER ALONE WITH A GRIM SMILE ON HIS FACE AND THE STORY HE'D TELL GLADYS SO CLEAR IN HIS MIND...



GLADYS LISTENED TO LARRY AS HE
SIBBED OUT THE STORY OF HOW
THEY'D GONE SWIMMING...HE AND
PHIL...AND PHIL'D SUNK DOWN...AND

...AND BEFORE I COULD
GET TO HIM, HE WENT
DOWN FOR GOOD. HE...
HE MUST HAVE GOTTEN
A CRAMP. I...I TRIED
TO DIVE FOR HIM...BUT
THE OREGONIAN!

IT WOULD TAKE TIME LARRY
DECIDED...TIME FOR GLADYS TO
FORGET PHIL. IN THE MEANTIME,
HE WOULD GO TO THE SOUTH
PACIFIC...TO THE TINY ATOLL WITH
ITS FABULOUS CYSTER BEES...AND
MAKE HIS FORTUNE.

I'LL BE BACK IN
THREE MONTHS,
GLADYS. PERHAPS,
BY THEN YOU WILL
HAVE GOTTEN OVER
THIS, AND MAYBE I,
YOU AND I.

I'LL NEVER
STOP LOVING
HIM LARRY!
SOME NEVER.

THE TRIP TO THE ATOLL WAS LONG,
BUT LARRY DIDN'T MIND IT. ONCE ON
BOARD, HE LOST NO TIME IN MAKING
FRIENDS...

BABY, YOU'RE THE
MOST GORGEOUS
GOLL ON THIS SHIP!
I...I GASP!

WELL...SO
ON...DON'T
JUST LEAVE
ME HANG-
ING!



WERE HIS EYES DECEIVING HIM? WAS THE FOAM AND
THE SPARK AND THE CHURRING WATER BESIDE THE SHIP
PLAYING TRICKS ON HIM, OR DID HE ACTUALLY SEE
THE BLISTER WHITE BODY?



WHAT IS IT, LARRY?

IS THERE? IN THE WATER?
I...I...NO? IT CAN'T BE!
I MUST BE SEEING THINGS!

AND WAS THE FOUL ODOR OF THE SEA AND DECAY
AND ROTTING FLESH THAT BEARED HIS NOSTRILS
WHEN HE OPENED HIS CABIN DOOR THAT NIGHT JUST
LARRY'S IMAGINATION?



WAS IT A DREAM? OR DID LARRY ACTUALLY SEE
THE WHITE PULPY FISH-FITTED FACE IN THE PORTHOLE
THAT NIGHT WHEN HE'D BEEN STARTLED OUT OF A SOUND
SLEEP.



HUH? WHO...WHO...GOOD LORD!

AND WAS IT THE SEA, OR DID HE ACTUALLY HEAR
THAT LAUGHTER...THAT RIPPING BLOOD-CUR-
DLING LAUGHTER COMING IN FROM THE MURKY FOS
BEYOND THE SHIP THE NIGHT HE STROLLED THE
DECK ALONE.



WHO...WHO'S OUT
THERE?

THE SHIP DOCKED AT TARTI AND LARRY LOST NO TIME IN HIRING A PLANE TO TAKE HIM SOUTH TO THE ATOLL.



CAN YOU LAND THIS CRAFT IN A LAGOON?

I CAN DROP IT ON A GARD, MISTER!

ON THAT PLANE TRIP SOUTH... SWIMMING LOW OVER THE BLUE PACIFIC... WAS LARRY DRAZY... OR DID HE SEE IT AGAIN... THERE JUST BELOW HIM... THAT ASHER, PULPY, BLOATED FORM...



I'MATTER, MISTER CANNON? AIR SICK?

CHUCK... A LITTLE, I GUESS.

THE ATOLL CAME UP... A PEARL AGAINST A BLUE BATH SEA-LINING... GUARDING ITS OWN PEARL TREASURE. LARRY CAST HIS FEARS FROM HIS MIND WHEN HE SAW IT...



THERE IT IS! LAND IN THAT LAGOON!

RIGHT!

THE TINY SEAPLANE CAME DOWN GENTLY AND BAT BOBBING QUIETLY IN THE BLUE LAGOON AS LARRY UNPACKED HIS GEAR, REMOVED THE FLIPPERS AND THE RUBBER GLASS-WINDOWED MASK, AND BEGAN TO UNPACK.



HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU GOING TO DIVE FOR SOMETHING?

YEP! THERE'S AN OYSTER BED IN THIS LAGOON... WITH PEARLS THE SIZE OF FOUR FIST, AND I'M GOING TO GET ME A FEW.

TINY FISH SCATTERED BEFORE HIM AS LARRY SHOT DOWNWARD. HE PASSED THE OLD RUSTED NETTHER... THE BURKEN ASSAULT BOATS... THE WATER-LOGGED BLASTED PILING. AND THEN HE SAW IT... THE OYSTER BED. HE SWAM TOWARD IT... EAGERLY...



LARRY WAS SO BUSY WRENCHING THE LARGEST OYSTER HE COULD FIND FROM THE SANDY BOTTOM THAT HE NEVER NOTICED THE PUTRID, SLIMY, WHITE FORM DRIFT TOWARD HIM. AND WHEN ITS BLOATED ARMS CLOSED AROUND HIS NECK, AND THE ROTTER FACE GRINNED AT HIM, IT WAS TOO LATE.



PHH... CHUCK... BLURP...

HEH, HEH! YEP, SIDDIES! THAT'S MY TAPL. THE PILOT OF THE SEAPLANE WAITED AROUND FOR LARRY TO COME UP FOR SEVERAL HOURS. FINALLY, HE SHRUGGED, WENT THROUGH LARRY'S PANTS, EXTRACTED THE MONKEY FROM HIS WALLET, TORRSED THE REST OF LARRY'S GEAR INTO THE LAGOON, AND TOOK OFF. AND YOU'LL TAKE OFF WHEN YOU RECEIVE YOUR KIT FROM THE E.C. RAY-ADDICT CLUB. NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO C.R. I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAIL, THE VAULT OF HORROR! BYE! E.C., THAT IS!



THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heh, heh! The every mail I'm getting lately! Nobody writes criticizing me anymore, nobody writes threatening letters! Now all I get is poetry, song titles, book titles, and pretentious looks like the whole country's gone crazy! Well, as Lincoln said, "To get to give the people what they want" (Lincoln said THAT—ed.) Yeah, JOE LINCOLN, he runs a defense movie outside of Omaha, Nebraska; Specializes in 3-D pictures. Only ones equipped with polaroid watchfields allowed. (Oh, hah! We thought you meant IRVING LINCOLN—and I IRVING LINCOLN? When does HE do? He goes around saying "You gotta give the people what they want"—ed.) Oh, HEM! So anyway, here are the latest additions to E.C.'s HORROR HIT PARADE, suggested by Bernie and Sunday Goshaw of Spring Valley, New York; Bill Rosen and Joe Higgins of Brooklyn, N. Y.; Mike Larkin of Philly, P. State of Wisconsin, W.; Donald Kesselman of Chicago, Tony Egan and Gregory Rosen of N. Y. C.; Donny Skanes of Ardmore, Pa.; Maurice Byron of Alexandria, Ind.; Dennis Bortolussi of Green Springs, Mass.; and Peggy DeMare and Lloyd Gelin of Detroit, Mich.

TERRY'S SCREAM (from SLIME-LIGHT)
BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL GROUND EYES
AFTER THE MATE IS OVER
SEVEN BLOODLESS NIGHTS (MAKE ONE
VAMPIRE WEASE)
I BELIEVE (THAT FOR EVERY DROP OF
BLOOD THAT FALLS, A VAMPIRE GROWS)
WITH A TONG IN MY HEART
I'M SLITTING BY THE WINDOW (WATCHING
THE BLOOD-DROPS FALL)
LYNN-BOATS ARE A-COMIN
WITH THESE GLANDS
THE SCREAM OF TORTURE
I'M WINCING WITH SPEARS IN MY THROAT
RATTLE RHYTHM OF THE REPULSIVE
ON THE TAUNTED SIDE OF THE MEAT
SQUAWK YOU WERE HERE!
WHO'S GONY NOW?
DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEX
WITH MY HEAD WIDE OPEN I'M SCREAMING
WHEN YOU GORE HER TWO-LIPS
YOU'D BE SO NICE TO COME GROWN TO
IDA TASTES LIKE APPLE CIDER
THE GIRL THAT I HURT
SEND ME ONE DOZEN POSTS
TUNE IS GURRING OUT ALL OVER

And here are some more additions to our LIVED LITERATURE LIBRARY, sent along by Benny Crow of Dallas, Texas; Jimmy Ted of Pineville, W. Va.; and Donny Mares of Springfield, Ill.

BOURNE FAMILY ROBINSON
WITHERING AGENTS
NOW GREEN WAS MY SALLY
THE LASH OF THE MORGANS

THE GIRLAND OF GODS
GREAT EXPECTATIONS (last)
GREAT RECOGNITIONS
AGONY AND CLEOPATRA
ROMEO THE GHUOL WE EY
SORMA'S DOOM

And now for some MORRID MOVIES, produced by David Gould of Grand Lake Stream, Maine, and Sam Campbell and Annalee Alexander of Waynesville, N. C.

A STREETCAR NAMED MY SINE
TWE AFRICAN'S SLEEN
HIGH STROWN
MUNG BEES
CALL ME MAD MAN
THE GREATEST CHUCK ON EARTH
WRING SOLOMON'S SPINE
THE FARMER TALKS A LIFE

Next, PULSATING POGGONS, loaned in by Web Andrews of Melrose, Mass., and Willard Johnson of Jackson, Miss.

WATCHIT SQUAD
BLIND MATE
MENACE DAY
MARTIN SLAM
SCARY MOORE
BLOS HOPE
DEAD SKELETON

Last, and probably least, some FETTERED POETRY

BANQUET

We had some friends in to dinner
Everything was perfectly swell
But mother spoiled the party
She simply didn't taste well

—Lee Ellen Gie
Brooklyn, N. Y.

AUCTION

Shocking, Delirious, Dark,
His Head Bailed off the Neck

Now that the adjustments are over, watch out! Here comes the commercial E.C. FAN-ASSET CLUB! Don't be a slacker! Join the club! Send in two bits and get your bits! Turn to the corner, and you'll discover the blank, mawkish SUBSCRIPTIONS. By the way, one a dollar for eight! THIRD ANNUAL TALE OF HORROR! The best for you from "El Seed is a quarter" we'll send you your order!

The address for subscriptions, and mail is

The Crypt-Keeper
Box 705, Dept. 60
125 Lafayette Street
N. Y. C. 10013



CHOICE!



The ground was soft and clinging as Farraday slipped out of the thick forest surrounding the prison wall. There was a heavy mist rising from the ground, and all around him he could hear the incessant clamor of the jungle. The long, dark foliage swished eerily in the hot night air... it would partially cover the sound of his feet moving through the oozy jungle lanes.

Farraday moved along stealthily, like a hunted animal, his plan of escape churning in his mind. If he could creep through the jungle into the miserable little seacoast town and hide in one of the grimy steamboats moored at the crumbling wharfs, in a week or so he'd probably be gone forever from this cursed tropical penal colony. The discomfort and pain of escaping through the jungle was nothing compared to the prospect of another five years in prison, Farraday thought to himself. He HAD to get away, at all cost, for he could never live through the prison sentence, anyway. The giant flies and vicious mosquitoes and stinging, blood-sucking spiders swarming over the camp by the millions would eat him alive long before he was ready for release!

Farraday paused momentarily, listening intently for a sound of alarm. Then he straightened up, ignoring the fact that his sweating hands were trembling with nervousness, and plunged on through the stifling undergrowth. They hadn't discovered yet that he was gone... every minute he could gain would help immeasurably in his getaway.

He was coming to clearer ground now: the earth was dry and sun-parched, the trees were spaced further apart and the grass was lower and less matted. He'd have to be careful here, for he could be spotted as he moved through the open valley. He crouched again and

moved slower, his body bent like an ape swinging along the jungle floor. About 50 yards he proceeded, then his heart almost stopped beating... a shrill whistle had sounded far back. His escape had been detected! In another moment the guards would be overrunning him and dragging him back so that insect-infested hell behind the towering stone walls!

Farraday knew his only chance was to dig a shallow grave and slip into it, praying that the darkness of the night would hide him. With a frenzy born of desperation he began to scoop up the earth at his feet; in a few moments he had cleared a patch large enough for his body. He dropped face-down into it without a second's hesitation.

Almost before he had drawn another breath he was aware of a clammy tangling spreading over his exposed flesh. It was pitch-black, but he knew without seeing what it was that was swarming over him: he had plunged headlong into a nest of white maggots! Already they were tearing at his skin, their stinging pincers probing his cheeks and jaw, sinuous lines writhing into his nostrils and mouth. His eyelids felt as if they had caught fire... but Farraday didn't move a muscle. Even as he felt the stabbing pain at his throat and realized that the skin of his chest, inside his shirt, was being torn loose, he could think of only one thing. He was in fiery agony, but if only he could stay here in this shallow trench, the guards would never find him! And as his mind reeled and his body twitched uncontrollably as his blood trickled from a thousand deadly wounds... he was soled by one thought: if the guards couldn't find him, he wouldn't have to endure the horrors of prison life again... wouldn't be assailed by giant flies and the savage spiders!



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HERE'S A BUBBLY LITTLE TALE OF
TITANIC TERROR! I CALL IT...

PRAIRIE SCHOONER



MILDRED JACKSON, FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR OF HER HOUSE AND SCREAMED WITH JOY. HE STOOD ON THE PORT-
STARVED FRONT PORCH, DRESSED RESPLENDENTLY IN HIS CAPTAIN'S UNIFORM, HIS FACE BRONZED FROM FORTY
YEARS AT SEA. HIS EYES GLOVED AND SCINTILLING, HIS MOUTH SMILED HIS TWO SUIT CASES BEHIND HIM...

ISRA! ISRA! WHY DIDN'T YOU WRITE ME
YOU WERE COMING TO VISIT? OH, ISRA.
IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

HELLO, MILLY. GOT A PLACE FOR
YOUR OLD SEA GOD BROTHER TO
BUNK DOWN FOR A SPELL?



D. Engstrom

MILLY LED ISRA INTO THE PARLOR...

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR
YOU HERE, ISRA. YOU KNOW
THAT. HOW LONG WILL YOU
STAY?

JUST A SPELL,
MILLY! JUST TILL
I DECIDE WHAT I'M
GONNA DO NEXT.
Y'SEE... THEY TOOK
AWAY MY SHIP. THEY
RETIRED ME.



RETIRED... OH,
ISRA. I'M SO
SORRY.

YEA, MY SAILIN' DAYS ARE
OVER, MILLY. I'M A LAND-
LUBBER, NOW. WELL, WHERE
DO I STOW MY BEAR?



THAT WAS HOW EZRA JACKSON CAME TO LIVE WITH HIS SISTER MILDRED. AT FIRST, MILLY WAS VERY HAPPY TO HAVE HIM. AFTER ALL, SHE WAS AN OLD MAID...AND EZRA WAS COMPANY, BUT AS TIME WENT ON, EZRA BEGAN TO DO STRANGE THINGS.



EZRA! WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT THROUGH YOUR SPY-GLASS?

NOTHING!

ONE NIGHT, MILLY WAS ROUSED OUT OF A SOUND SLEEP BY HEAVY FANS BEATING HER NOSEILY...



WHAT...WHAT'S WRONG, EZRA? WHAT IS IT?

GET UP, YOU LATE SLEPER. YOU'RE LATE FOR YOUR WATCH, AND IF YOU EVER DO THIS AGAIN, I'LL HAVE YOU FANNED IN THE BRIG.

IT WAS OBVIOUS TO POOR MILLY THAT HER ELDER BROTHER WAS ILL...MENTALLY ILL. THE SHOCK OF BEING RETIRED HAD BEEN TOO MUCH FOR HIM. HIS MIND HAD SHATTERED. HE FANCIED HIMSELF AT SEA AGAIN...THE HOUSE, HIS SHIP...AND SHE, HIS CREW.

YOU CALL THIS CLEAN? I WANT THIS DECK SCURBED TILL I CAN SEE MY REFLECTION! UNDERSTAND?

YES, EZRA!



I SAID WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT WITH YOUR SPY-GLASS?

N-O-THING, MILLY! I WAS JUST WATCHING THAT SHIP ON THE HORIZON!



SHIFFF! EZRA! THIS IS KANSAS! THERE AREN'T ANY SHIPS ON THE HORIZON. THERE ISN'T ANY WATER...FOR HUNDREDS OF MILES!

FROM THAT NIGHT ON, MILLY WAS FORCED TO "STAND WATCH" SHE HAD TO MOVE THROUGH THE HALLS OF THE OLD HOUSE FROM TWO A.M. TO DAWN, CARRYING A LANTERN AND SHOUTING...



LOUDER, YOU BLITHERING IDIOT! LOUDER!

EVERY BELL AND ALL'S WELL!



DON'T "EZRA" ME! IT'S "YES, CAPTAIN JACKSON!" REMEMBER THAT! NOW, GET TO WORK, YOU BLISSY RAT!

Y-YES, CAPTAIN JACKSON.

MILLY HAD BEEN A SCHOOL TEACHER IN HER YOUNGER YEARS. SHE'D WORKED HARD AND MANAGED TO SAVE A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY. SHE'D USED PART OF IT TO BUY THE HOUSE SHE NOW LIVED IN. THE REST, SHE'D INVESTED WISELY, AND SHE'D BEEN ABLE TO LIVE COMFORTABLY. BUT WITH EZRA'S ARRIVAL, HER MEAGER INCOME WAS NOT ENOUGH...



SO MILLY WAS FORCED TO EARN EXTRA MONEY TO AUGMENT THE SMALL INCOME SHE DERIVED FROM HER INVESTMENTS. SHE HAD TO TAKE IN WASHING...



EZRA STOOD IN THE CENTER OF THE CELLAR FLOOR, STARES ABOUT HIM WITH WIDE BEAMING EYES...



MILLY WAS HELPLESS. SHE HAD NO OTHER CHOICE... EXCEPT, PERHAPS, TO HAVE EZRA PUT AWAY. SO SHE CALLED IN A CARPENTER... A PLUMBER...



EDRA STORMED ABOUT IN THE CELLAR, SHOUTING OUT HIS ORDERS...

RIP OUT THOSE WINDOWS, CLOSE 'EM UP, PUT UP FALSE WALLS. MARGONY PAMPELO WALLS. SET IN PORT HOLES, REAL PORT HOLES... THAT OPEN!

YES, MR. JACKSON.

CAPTAIN JACKSON? PUT OCEAN SCENES BEHIND THE PORT HOLES. HAND SHIP'S LANTERNS AROUND. PUT IN A BUNK, A GALLEY, A HEAD. MAKE EVERYTHING AUTHENTIC. THIS IS MY SHIP!

YES, CAPTAIN!



AND POOR MILLY WITHDREW HER LIFE'S SAVINGS FROM HER INVESTMENTS TO PAY FOR THE HOAGSHELL.

A, TWO... 3,000 DOLLARS. WHERE YOU ARE, MR. GUNNER?

THANK YOU, MA'AM. I HOPE YOUR BROTHER IS HAPPY WITH THE JOB WE DID!



"BELOW" IN HIS SHIP'S QUARTERS, CAPTAIN JACKSON BELLOWED...

STAND BY TO CAST OFF. ENGINE ROOM, FULL SPEED ASTERN. ALL HANDS, MAN YOUR STATIONS... ON THE DOUBLE...



MILLY CAME "BELOW" CARRYING HER LAUNDRY BASKET FILLED WITH THE WASH SHE'D BEEN TAKING IN...

WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE WITH THAT?

I'VE GOT TO DO THE SHIP'S LAUNDRY, CAPTAIN. I'VE...



EDRA STRUCK OUT SAVAGELY...

YOU'LL DO THE LAUNDRY ON DECK, YOU SCULLION BEGGAR. GET OUT OF MY QUARTERS...

OWWWWWW...



WITH HER INVESTMENTS WIPED OUT AND THE INCOME FROM THEM GONE, MILLY HAD TO TAKE IN MORE WASH THAN SHE COULD HANDLE IN ORDER TO MEET EXPENSES. AND EIRA'S ANGER BECAME WORSE AND WORSE. . .

SCRUB OUT THAT HEAD, YOU FO'G'SLE BRUDGE!

Y-YES, CAPTAIN!

POOR MILLY WOULD ESCAPE, EVERY CHANCE SHE COULD GET, AND LOCK HERSELF IN THE UPSTAIRS BATHROOM IN ORDER TO DO THE WASH IN THE TUB. AND AS SHE SCRUBBED, SHE WOULD LISTEN TO EIRA'S RANTING AND RAVING.

EASE THE HELM! BIVE 'ER MORE RUDDER! STEADY AS YOU GO! HARD APOFT! STEADY! STEADY! GO!

DOE...DOE...



ONE HOT SUMMER'S DAY, EIRA STOOD AT THE OPEN PORT HOLE, SHOUTING OUT AT THE SEA-SCAPE SCENE BEYOND. . .

WHILE UPSTAIRS, DIRECTLY OVER-HEAD IN THE BATHROOM, MILLY PANTED OVER A LOAD OF WASH. . .

THE HOT WATER, RUNNING INTO THE TUB OVER THE SOAKING CLOTHES, SENT UP CLOUDS OF STEAM WHICH FILLED THE LOCKED BATHROOM.



ANDY! ANDY THERE! SHIP ANDY! HOLD FAST. STAND BY!



SUDDENLY MILLY CLUTCHED AT THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN IN HER CHEST, TOPPLING OVER. . .

AND AS HER HEART-PAIRED AND HER LIFE FADED WITH IT, THE BOILING WATER OVERFLOWED THE TUB, POOLING ABOUT HER PROSTRATE BODY, SINKING THROUGH THE BATHROOM FLOOR. . .



GASP...



IN HIS CELLAR SHIP'S QUARTERS, CAPTAIN JACKSON LISTENED AS THE WATER, LEAKING DOWN FROM THE OVERFLOWING BATHTUB ABOVE, FILLED THE SPACE BETWEEN THE FALSE MAHOGANY PANELED WALLS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE...

STORMY SEA TONIGHT! BATTEN DOWN THE MATCHES. WE'RE IN FOR A BLOW.



THE CELLAR FILLED WITH STEAM, CAPTAIN JACKSON STAGGERED TO THE PORT HOLES, SLAMMED THEM SHUT. THE PRESSURE OF THE WATER CRUMPLED THE PANELED WALLS...



ABANDON SHIP! WE'RE SINKING!

SLUDDENLY, THE WATER BEGAN TO POUR THROUGH THE OPEN PORT HOLES...



ALL HANDS! ALL HANDS! WE'RE TAKING ON WATER! MAN THE BULGE PUMPS. SECURE THE BULKHEADS...

SLOWLY THE WATER ROSE IN THE CELLAR, BOILING, BUBBLING, BUSTLING EDGAR'S AGED BODY, BUT HE STUBBORNLY STOOD FAST...



ABANDON SHIP! THE CAPTAIN MUST REMAIN...

UNTIL THE RISING HOT WATER REACHED HIS CHIN... HIS NECK... Poured INTO HIS MOUTH AND STERED HIS TONGUE... HIS THROAT... HIS LUNGS...



GLUGG... GLUGG...

HIS, HEST? YEP, KIDDER. THAT'S MY MURDER MARINE OFFERING. EZRA FINALLY EGGED UP... IN HOT WATER! THIS IS THE FIRST CASE ON RECORD BY THE WAY, OF A CAPTAIN GOING DOWN WITH HIS SHIP IN THE MIDDLE OF A KANSAS PRAIRIE... IN A CELLAR AND NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE CRYPT-KEEPER WHO IS WAITING TO WIND UP MY REEL RAG! REMEMBER! IF YOU'RE A FAN, AND AN ADDICT. JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB. 'BYE, HOYT!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEY, HEY! AND NOW, IT'S MORROD-WEAL-TIME. WELCOME TO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, CREEPS. THIS IS YOUR REVOLTING RESTAURATEUR, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO BLING SLIME...AND WIND UP LIKE MYOCH-MAH FOR THIS IDIOTIC ISSUE. CARE FOR SOME SEA FOOD? WELL, HERE'S A TASTY TERROR TID-BIT TO TURN YOUR STOMACH. I CALL THIS SLOP-SERVING...

HALF-BAKED!

CAULIN SUGAR STOOD IN THE SPOTLESS KITCHEN OF "THE SEA SMELL RESTAURANT" STARING IN MORBID FASCINATION AT THE GULMERING, BLUE-GREEN, SPINY-LEGGED CLAWED CREATURES THAT SCRATCHED DRILL AROUND AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BUTTER TUB. CAUTIOUSLY, HE REACHED IN AND PULLED ONE OF THEM FROM THE TUB, HOLDING IT UP. HE LAUGHED RADICALLY...

YOU'RE NEXT, YOU DISGUSTING THING. NOW, NOW! DON'T STRUGGLE! IT'S NO USE! HEH, HEH!

CAULIN REACHED FOR A KNIFE, REPLACED THE STRUGGLING LOBSTER, BELLY UP ON THE RUDE WOODEN KITCHEN TABLE AND GRINNED DOWN AT IT.

FIRST, WE SPLIT YOU OPEN... FROM HEAD TO TAIL... LIKE SO...



THE LOBSTER SQUIRMED. CALVIN FORCED THE KNIFE BLADE AGAINST ITS SOFT-SHELLED UNDERSIDE AND, WITH A SLIGHT SAWING MOTION, CRUNCHED IT THROUGH. THE LOBSTER, NOW PRACTICALLY SEVERED IN HALF, STILL WIGGLED ITS SPINY LEGS AND WAVED ITS HUGE CLAWS AWKWARDLY...



HEH, HEH. NOW I *KNOW* THAT I HAD SOME *SENSITIVE* INSTRUMENT SO THAT I COULD HEAR YOUR BLOOD-CURLING SQUEALS, LITTLE UGLY MONSTER

CALVIN MOVED THE THRASHING SPLIT LOBSTER ONTO A RACK AND DROD IT INTO THE STOVE, BELOW THE LICKING BLUE FLAMES OF THE BRUILLER...



AND NOW, WE *BROKE* YOU ALIVE. WE LISTEN TO YOU *MOES* AND POP UNTIL YOU TURN ORANGE-RED AND YOU STOP YOUR SQUEALING.

CALVIN STARED INTO THE STOVE AT THE BRUILLING LOBSTER. HIS EYES BLINKED ALMOST MANICALLY AS HE WATCHED ITS STRUGGLING ABATE...



DEAD, ALREADY, BLAST IT!

CALVIN GRINNED...

I MUST LOWER THE FLAME SO THAT THE *BEST* ONE WILL DIE SLOWER!



BEHIND CALVIN, THE SEA BIRDS RESTAURANT'S CHEF SHOOK HIS HEAD AS HE WATCHED HIS EMPLOYEE.



WHY DO YOU TAKE SUCH SADISTIC DELIGHT IN KILLING THOSE POOR LOBSTERS, MR. DUBAN?

I HAVE THEM, JOHN!

CALVIN'S FACE SPUN GRIM AS HE TURNED TO HIS CHEF...



I HATE UGLY AND HORRIBLE CREATURES! HORRIBLE CREATURES SHOULD DIE HORRIBLY!

A LOBSTER IS A LIVING THING, MR. DUBAN... NO LIVING THING SHOULD BE MADE TO SUFFER

A LOBSTER IS *HIDEOUS*... *HELP!* IT DESERVES TO SUFFER, JOHN. ITS OWN *DELICIOUS* MERITS AN *UGLY* DEATH...

PERHAPS... TO A LOBSTER... IT IS YOU WHO ARE *UGLY*, MR. DUBAN!



MEANWHILE, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, A FLEW MAILED UP THE BEACONST FROM THE SEA SHELL RESTAURANT, A FISHERMAN GUIDED HIS BOAT OVER THE TUBBING OCEAN SHELLS TO A CORAL FLOAT FROM WHICH FLEW A TATTERED FLAG.



THE LAST ONE. IF THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS ONE, WE WILL HAVE NO MONEY FOR FOOD!

THE FISHERMAN PULLED UP BESIDE THE BOBBING MARKER AND PULLED IT INTO HIS SEA SKIFF. SLOWLY, TEDIOUSLY, HE HAULED IN THE DRIPPING LINE THAT WAS FASTENED TO THE CORAL FLOAT...



I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT. ALL ALONG THE COAST, OTHER LOBSTER FISHERMEN ARE FINDING TWO, MAYBE THREE LOBSTERS IN EACH OF THEIR POTS. FOR TWO WEEKS NOW, I HAVE NOT FOUND ONE!

FINALLY, THE LOBSTER TRAP BURNED, AND THE FOUL SCENT OF THE FISH HEAD, PLACED WITHIN IT AS BAIT, BECAME THE FISHERMAN'S NOSTRILL...



EMPTY! ALL EMPTY! NOT ONE LOBSTER IN ANY OF MY POTS.

SADLY, THE FISHERMAN GUIDED HIS INBOARD BACK TO THE BEACH WHERE A WOMAN AND CHILD STOOD IN THE DOORWAY OF A WIND-SCARRED SHACK, WAITING...



WELL, AMBROSE? NOT A ONE, LUCKY! NOT ONE LOBSTER! I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT.

THE FISHERMAN ENTERED HIS DAD'S SHACK AND SAT DOWN WEARILY...



PERHAPS TOMORROW, TOMORROW, TOMORROW... WE HAVE SAID THAT FOR TWO WEEKS! AMBROSE...

THE CHILD BEGAN TO CRY...



POPPA... SON... I AM HUNGRY. I WILL MAKE THE BOY SOME FISH, AMBROSE.

FISH! THE BOY NEEDS MILK, LUCK. LOBSTERS COULD BUY HIM MILK. LOBSTERS BRING A GOOD PRICE, BUT I CANNOT CATCH THEM! MY POTS ARE EMPTY!

PERHAPS TOMORROW YOUR LUCK WILL CHANGE, AND YOUR POTS WILL BE FULL, AMBROSE.



THE SEASHELL RESTAURANT WAS NOTED FOR ITS BAKED LOBSTER. PEOPLE CAME FROM MILES AWAY TO FEAST ON THE SUCULENT WHITE MEAT DIPPED IN BUTTER SAUCE. CALVIN TARGAN DID A THRIVING BUSINESS.

THE LOBSTER WAS ESPECIALLY FASTY TODAY, MR. DUBAN.

THANK YOU, MR. DUBAN. SOON EVENING, COME AGAIN.

AFTER CLOSING TIME THAT NIGHT, JOHN, THE CHEF, REMINDED CALVIN...

WE'RE BETTING LOW ON LOBSTERS, MR. DUBAN. IF WE HAVE A GOOD CROWD TOMORROW, WE'LL RUN OUT!

I'LL PICK SOME UP IN THE MORNING... ON THE WAY IN? GOOD-NIGHT, JOHN.

JOHN NODDED AND LEFT. CALVIN LISTENED AS THE CAR MOTOR SPOOKED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT, THEN TURNED TO THE ALMOST EMPTY TUB...

HIDEOUS, DISGUSTING CREATURES!

AFTER A WHILE, CALVIN LEFT THE RESTAURANT. HE LOOKED UP CAREFULLY, BUT HE DID NOT GET INTO HIS CAR. INSTEAD, HE WALKED DOWN TO THE BEACH...

BLAST IT! THERE'S A MOON OUT TONIGHT. WELL, I'LL HAVE TO CHANGE IT.

HE MOVED DOWN THE BEACH TO WHERE A SEA SHIRT WAS MOORED. UNTYING IT, CALVIN PUSHED THE CRAFT INTO THE COOCHING BREAKERS.

THE INBOARD MOTOR COUGHED AND SPUTTERED, THEN BEGAN TO HUM EVERLY. CALVIN GUIDED THE SKIFF OUT INTO THE OPEN SEA...

A FEW MILES OUT, HE PULLED UP BESIDE A BOBBING MARKER FROM WHICH A TATTERED FLAG FLAPPED...



AMBROSE, THE LOBSTER FISHERMAN, PEEED THE FLOOR OF HIS DINGY SHACK. LUCY, HIS WIFE, WATCHED HIM WITH SAD EYES.



COME TO BED, AMBROSE. YOU MUST GET UP EARLY.

I AM NOT SLEEPY, LUCY. I AM THINKING ABOUT MY LOBSTER POTS.

AMBROSE STOPPED PEEING. HE LISTENED. FAR AWAY OVER THE BEAR OF THE GULF POUNDING THE HEAVY BEACH, AMBROSE HEARD A SOUND... A DULL HUMMING SOUND.



A SEA SKIFF... OUT THERE IN THE NIGHT. SO THAT'S IT?

WHAT IS IT, AMBROSE?

AMBROSE POINTED OUT TO SEA. OUT TO THE DISTANT TOWING SMELLS.

SOMEONE'S OUT THERE. AMBROSE! THAT'S WHY MY LOBSTER POTS ARE ALWAYS EMPTY. SOMEONE IS STEALING MY LOBSTERS.



AMBROSE WAS OUT OF THE DOOR OF HIS WEATHER BEATEN SHACK IN A FLASH.

AMBROSE! COME BACK!



I'LL GET HIM, LUCY! I'LL GET HIM!

FAR OUT ON THE MOONLIT WAVES, CALVIN DUGAN LIFTED A LOBSTER POT INTO HIS SEA SKIFF.

TWO BEAUTIFIES! THAT'S SEVENTEEN ALREADY AND I'VE ONLY RAISED HALF OF HIS TRAPS...



SUDDENLY CALVIN LOOKED UP. SCARCELY ONE HUNDRED YARDS AWAY, ANOTHER SEA SKIFF GLIDED TOWARD HIM SILENTLY.



IT'S THE LOBSTER FISHERMAN HE MUST HAVE ROWED OUT. THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T HEAR HIM! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

CALVIN STRUGGLED WITH HIS INBOARD, TRYING TO START IT. THE OTHER SEA SKIFF PULLED ALONGSIDE. THE FISHERMAN IN IT GLARED AT HIM WITH BURNING EYES.



SO? NO WONDER MR DUGAN HADN'T BOTHERED TO STOP BY LATELY TO SEE IF I WANT ANY LOBSTERS TO SELL. HE KNEW!

KEEP AWAY! AMBROSE! KEEP AWAY! I WARN YOU!

AMBROSE SHARLED...

YOU ONLY THIEF!
YOU HIDEOUS MONSTER!
MY CHILD HAS GONE
WITHOUT MILK AND
MEAT AND CLOTHES
BECAUSE OF YOU!

I'LL PAY
YOU,
AMBROSE!
I'LL PAY...



AMBROSE SCREAMED

PAY ME!! REVERT!
I'M GOING TO REPORT
YOU TO THE POLICE.
THEY'LL THROW
YOU IN JAIL, WHERE
YOU BELONG!

DON'T BE
A FOOL,
AMBROSE!
I'LL PAY
YOU WELL
TO FORGET
THIS!



NO! I WON'T TAKE
YOUR MONEY! IT'S
JAIL FOR YOU,
JAIL...

YOU
FORCE
ME TO DO
THIS,
AMBROSE!



THE KNIFE BLADE IN CALVIN OUSAN'S HAND
BLINDED IN THE MOONLIGHT...



NOW, I'LL HAVE TO KILL YOU,
AMBROSE... TO KEEP YOU
FROM TALKING...

AMBROSE'S SHRIEK ECHOED ACROSS THE HEAVING WATER
AS CALVIN PLUNGED THE KNIFE INTO HIS WRITHING BODY
AGAIN AND AGAIN...



THEN, CALVIN LASHED AMBROSE INTO HIS SEA SKIRT.



... AND CHOPPED A HOLE IN THE FLOORBOARDS, LETTING
THE SEA WATER IN...



SLOWLY, THE BOAT, WITH AMBROSE'S BODY, BANKED BELOW THE TOSSENG OCEAN WAVES.



CALVIN STARTED HIS INBOARD AND SLIDED HIS SKIFF BACK TO THE BEACH...



...AND LOADED THE BUTTERTUB WITH THE STOLEN LOBSTERS INTO HIS CAR TRUNK.



HE'S STARTED HOME...ROARING DOWN THE COAST ROAD AT BREAKNECK SPEED...WHEN THE SLOW-CUT OCCURRED...



AS CALVIN'S LURCHING CAR SPUN OVER, THE STEERING WHEEL SHATTERED, RIPPING INTO HIS BODY...TEARING...FLASHING...



HE LAY THERE, FUMING, SQUIRMING, HIS BODY ALMOST SPLIT IN TWO, AS THE OVERTURNED CAR CAUGHT FIRE AND THE FLAMES LICKED AT HIM AND HE SCREAMED AND SHRIELED AND WAS BROILED ALIVE.



HIS, HEE! THAT'S MY STORY, KIDDER! CALVIN ENDED UP LIKE THE LOB- STERS HE'D BEEN STEALING. WHEN I CAME UPON HIS BURNING CAR, HE WAS JUST ABOUT GONE. I WAS SO MAD THERE WASN'T A DROP OF BUTTER SAUCE AROUND! AND TALKING ABOUT SAUCE, YOU'D BETTER HURRY UP AND JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB! MEMBERSHIP IS LIMITED TO 152,000,000 PEOPLE. SO DON'T LOSE OUT! GET YOUR FULL-COLOR CERTIFICATE, YOUR EMERGENCY



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SPECIAL!

3

2 PHONES COMPLETE

Check the Kind of Body YOU Want!

RIGHT IN THE COUPON BELOW

...and I'll Prove How EASILY You Can Have It!

Charles Atlas

Awarded the title of "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."



SILVER CUP GIVEN AWAY

12" High Silver Cup given to the person whose physical measurements are the best 2 months.

JUST tell me where you want it—and I'll add **SOLID INCHES** of powerful new muscle **SO FAST** your friends will grow bug-eyed with wonder!

Do you want me to broaden your shoulders—put trip-hammer power in both your arms—make your legs two pillars of strength? Then just check what you want below. I'll prove you can get it in just 15 minutes a day—in your own home—or it won't cost you a penny!

I don't care if you are 15 or 50 years old—or how ashamed of your present physical condition you may be. I can give you a "barrel chest" and a vice-like grip. I can shoot new strength into your old backbone, exercise those inner organs—help you create your body to full of pep, vigor and red-blooded vitality that you won't feel there's even "standing room" left for weakness and that lary feeling. I'll wake up t h a t sleeping energy of yours and make it burn like a high-powered dynamo! You'll feel and look different. Men, you'll begin to LIVE!

WHAT'S MY SECRET?

"**DYNAMIC TENSION**." That's the secret! The identical natural method that I myself developed to change my body from the scrawny skinny chested weakling I was at 17

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My method—"Dynamic Tension"—will turn the trick for you. No theory—so easy! Spend only 15 minutes a day in your own home. From the very start you'll be using my method of "Dynamic Tension" about unconsciously every minute of the day—walking, bending over, etc.—to **BUILD THE MUSCLE AND VITALITY** you want. And you'll be using the method which many great athletes use for keeping in condition—prize fighters, wrestlers, baseball and football players, etc.

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SEND NOW for my latest book, "Exercising Health and Strength." (Over 3½ MILLION fellows have sent for it already.) It contains 32 pages, packed from cover to cover with actual photographs and valuable advice. Shows what "Dynamic Tension" has done for others, answers many vital questions. Page by page it shows what I can do for YOU. This book is a real prize for any fellow who wants a better build. Yet I'll send you a copy absolutely FREE. Just glance through it may mean the turning point in your whole life! Check the information you want (on the coupon below) and rush it to me personally.

CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 1645, 115 East 23rd St., N. Y. 10, N. Y.



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"I gained 11 lbs. and 4½ inches on my chest, 3 inches on my arms. I am a new constipated."

—Bobby Harris, Canada

"I gained 34 lbs. and increased my chest 6 inches!"

—J. S. New York

"I gained 29 lbs. When I started

your course I weighed only 141. Now I weigh 170"

—J. K., New York

"The benefits are wonderful! The first week my arm increased one inch, my chest at two inches."

—J. M., Conn.

"You changed me from a weakling to a real ho-man. My chest has gone up 5 inches. I am a solid mass of muscle."

—J. W., Wisconsin

CHARLES ATLAS, DEPT. 1645
115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.

Dear Charles Atlas: Here's the kind of Body I Want:

(Check as many as you like)

- ☐ More Weight—Solid—in The Right Places
- ☐ Broader Chest and Shoulders
- ☐ More Powerful Arms and Grip
- ☐ Firmer Waist and Hips
- ☐ Better Regulation, Digestion, Clearer Skin
- ☐ More Powerful Leg Muscles
- ☐ Better Sleep, More Energy

Send me absolutely FREE a copy of your famous book "Exercising Health and Strength"—32 pages, crisscrossed with photographs, advice to vital health, questions, and valuable advice. I understand this book is mine to keep and sending for it does not obligate me in any way.

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH... AND HEH? (JUST TO BE DIFFERENT.) CRAWL INTO THE DREEPY OLD GRUDDY CRYPT OF TERROR, FRIENDS. THIS IS YOUR GHOSTLY HOST, LE CRYPT-KEEPER... YOUR MASTER OF CEMETERIES... READY TO THRILL YOU, CRAWL YOU, AND KILL YOU WITH A SLIMY SELECTION FROM MY FRENCHISH FILE OF POUL FANCIES. READY? WELL, HE'RE GOES WITH THE POW! PARN I CALL...

OPERATION FRIENDSHIP



SMILING WARMLY, DOCTOR ANDREW HOBART SETTLED HIMSELF IN HIS FAVORITE CHAIR. A SIGH OF DEEP CONTENTMENT CAME FORTH AS HE FILLED HIS PIPE, LIT A DANCING FLAME, AND PUFFED BLUE SPIRALS TOWARD THE CEILING. IT WAS A RITUAL HE'D OBSERVED FOR LONG YEARS NOW... UNCOUNTED EVENINGS' WITH HIS FRIENDS. TURNING SLOWLY, THE DOCTOR OPENED THE CONVERSATION...

COMFORTABLE, PHILIP? NOW LET'S RELAX AND ENJOY OUR CHESS GAME... JUST YOU AND I... AS WE'VE DONE THESE PAST TWENTY-ODD YEARS. AH... THESE *QUIET EVENINGS* TOGETHER, PHILIP. THEY'RE ALL WE HAVE LEFT...

DOCTOR ROBERT PLACED THE CHESSBOARD ON THE LOW TABLE BEFORE HIM...

OTHERS WANT SCOFF, PHIL, BUT I SAY OURS IS ONE OF LIFE'S RARITIES... A PERFECT FRIENDSHIP... A BOND OF THE MINDS... A MENTAL MATING FAR MORE LASTING AND REWARDING THAN THAT OF MAN AND WIFE.



THE OLD DOCTOR WENT ON EAR-RUDELUSLY, ALWAYS THE MORE TALKATIVE OF THE TWO, HARDLY GIVING THE OTHER A CHANCE TO SPEAK. HIS VOICE DRIPPED ON... RICH WITH BELLOW MEMORIES... NOSTALGIC REMINISCENCE...



YES, PHILIP! TWENTY YEARS OF THIS! REMEMBER NOW IT ALL BEARS, PHILIP! NOW, AS KIDS, OUR FAMILIES MOVED NEXT DOOR TO EACH OTHER! REMEMBER?

'REMEMBER NOW, LIKE ALL KIDS, WE WERE SHY AT FIRST, BUT QUICKLY WARMED UP... FOUND THAT WE LIKED THE SAME THINGS.'



BOB, AM I? I LIKE YOU.

I LIKE YOU TOO, PHIL. LET'S BE PALS FOR LIFE... AND SEAL IT IN BLOOD...

'A KID'S PUNKY NO. IT WAS MORE THAN THAT, PHIL! IT WAS A PACT OF DEVOTION THAT NOTHING HAS BEEN ABLE TO TEAR ASART IN ALL THESE YEARS! NOTHING!'

GIVE YOUR NAME, PHIL. WE'LL BE BUNDLES FOREVER...

TILL WE'RE OLD MEN AND READY TO DIE ANDY...



'REMEMBER, PHIL? REMEMBER HOW INSEPARABLE WE WERE... PLAYING TOGETHER... SOME PLACES TOGETHER, FIGHTING TOGETHER... TWO OF US AGAINST THE WORLD.'

YOU ARE BULLY! DON'T EVER PICK ON MY PAL PHIL AGAIN, O'YHEART?

DEAF! DEAF! I SWE UP! I PROMISE! OHHHHH...

NOB... NOB...



'REMEMBER, PHILIP? WE WERE A MODERN JAMBO AND PYTHIAS, AND AS WE GREW OUT OF BOYHOOD, WE BECAME EVEN CLOSER, IF ANYTHING. REMEMBER, IN HIGH SCHOOL, HOW EVEN THE PRETTIEST GIRLS FAILED TO PULL US APART?...

SORRY JOAN! PHIL AND I ARE GOING TO THE MOVIES OURSELVES TONIGHT... TOGETHER!

I WON'T ASK YOU AGAIN, ANDREW ROBERT! YOU'RE... YOU'RE NOT HUMAN!



'NONE OF THE GIRLS UNDERSTOOD, PHIL. THEY COULDN'T THEIR CHEAP THRILLS OF DATING AND PETTING WERE AS CANNIBAL TO THE PLAYING ECSTASY OF OUR EMBRACING MINDS.'

I'VE DECIDED ON MEDICINE, PHIL! WHY DON'T YOU STUDY IT WITH ME?

SORRY ABOUT ELECTRONICS IS MY HEAT!



"COLLECTED THE SAME COLLEGE, OF COURSE, NATURALLY, WE COULD NOT BE EXACTLY ALIKE IN ALL THINGS. I PROMISED LIVING MECHANISMS AND YOU PROMISED COLD LIFELESS ONES. BUT EVEN HERE, WE FOUND COMMON GROUND."

IT'S A WELL KNOWN FACT THAT THE BRAIN EMITS ELECTRIC IMPULSES, PHIL. WHY DO YOU ASK?

I WAS JUST WONDERING, ANDY. SUPPOSE WE COULD CAPTURE THOSE IMPULSES AND REPRODUCE THEM INTO AUDIBLE BOUNDS... ELECTRONICALLY.

REMEMBER HOW WE WORKED TOGETHER ON YOUR THEORY, PHIL? THE CRAZY MACHINE WE BUILT. REMEMBER THAT SOUND... HOW WE KEPT IT ALIVE IN THE BRINE WATER... ATTACHING THE ELECTRODES TO ITS HEAD?

LISTEN, ANDY! LISTEN!

EAWWWW! WEEEEEEE!

IT WORKS, PHIL! IT WORKS!

"WE USED THOSE CLEVER SACRIFICE FOR OUR COMBINED DOCTORATE THESIS. WE KNOCKED 'EM DEAD, DIDN'T WE PHIL... GRADUATED WITH TOP HONORS."

CONGRATULATIONS, ANDY!

CAME TO YOU, PHIL!

"AND WENT OUT INTO THE WORLD TOGETHER. REMEMBER HOW WE FOUND THOSE TWO OFFICE SIDES BY SIDE? I HUNG OUT MY A.D. SHINGLE AND YOU HUNG OUT YOUR ELECTRONIC ENGINEER'S SIGN..."

READY FOR LUNCH, PHIL?

LET'S GO...

ANDY AND PHIL
HOLD
HANDS

DOCTOR ANDREW HOBART STUDIED THE CHESSBOARD BEFORE HIM AS IF HE WERE CONTEMPLATING THE MOVE HE'D HAD IN MIND WHEN THEY'D LEFT OFF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT...

WE BOTH MADE OUR MARKS, PHIL! YOU IN ELECTRONIC PATENTS... I IN SURGERY. AND ALWAYS, FROM THOSE FIRST YEARS, LIKE NOW, WE SPENT EVERY EVENING TOGETHER, OUR FRIENDSHIP CEMENTING ITSELF FIRMER EACH YEAR. REMEMBER?

"AND THEN CAME THOSE AWFUL WEEKS. I STILL SHUDDER AT THE MEMORY, PHILIP. I KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG. I FELT IT EVERY EVENING YOU CAME MORE AND MORE MOODY..."

I CAN'T MAKE IT TOMORROW NIGHT, ANDY! SOMETHING CAME UP!

SURE, PHIL! I UNDERSTAND.

WHAT'S UP, PHIL? I CAN FEEL SOMETHING STRANDING BETWEEN US! WHAT IS IT? TELL ME! I MUST KNOW!

HOW CAN I TELL YOU, ANDY? I... IT ISN'T EASY!

YOUR HESITATION, YOUR AVERTED EYES, A COLD CHILL, SHIPPED ME AND I STEELED MYSELF FOR THE SHOCK OF WHAT I COULD ALMOST SUSSE.

Oh... I'm in LOVE, AMOI!

No, Phil...

YOU WENT ON, NOT KNOWING HOW EACH WORD WHIP, ASKED MY FLINCHING SOUL...

HER NAME IS JONORA! HERE, HERE'S HER PICTURE! ISN'T SHE PRETTY?

Very... lovely, Phil!

I'M GOING TO MARRY HER, ANDY!

MARRY? BUT PHIL! OUR... OUR FRIENDSHIP... AFTER ALL THESE YEARS... YOU'LL BE BREAKING IT UP...

PLEASE, ANDY, DON'T MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A DOG! AFTER ALL... I AM SETTING ALONE IN YEARS! I'M ALMOST THIRTY! IT'S HORRIBLE FOR A MAN MY AGE TO WANT A WIFE... A HOME... ~~XXXX~~ AND OUR FRIENDSHIP ISN'T BREAKING UP, YOU'LL LIKE JONORA, AND...

NO, PHIL! IT WON'T BE THE SAME WITH YOU MARRIED! YOU CAN'T DO IT! LISTEN TO ME

"REMEMBER HOW I PLEADED WITH YOU, PHILIP! ANNOYED... NAYED... STORMED... BROVELED ON BENDED KNEES..."

PHIL, YOU CAN'T CAST ASIDE OUR FRIENDSHIP LIKE AN OLD SHOE, IT'S TOO SACRED! MARRIAGE IS FOR OTHERS, NOT FOR US, WITH OUR WEDDED BOND! PHIL, I SEE IN YOU... GIVE THIS CREATURE UP!

I'M... SORRY, ANDY...

YOU TURNED A STONEY HEART TO YOUR OLD FRIEND, PHILIP, AND THEN, ONE DAY, YOU BROUGHT JONORA TO MEET ME. SHE WAS LOVELY, ALL RIGHT, ON THE OUT-SIDE! BUT A MENTAL MONSTER WITHIN...

THIS IS ANDREW HOBART, JONORA!

SEE, PHILLY'S TOL' ME ALL ABOUT! FUN, DOO, HE SAYS YOU'RE REAL SMART.

YOUR FIANCEE EXAMBER— AFTER, JONORA! IT IS PHILIP WHO IS THE SMARTER OF THE TWO OF US!

PHILLY? SMART? AN, S'WONT HE'S BIG AN HAND-SOME AN... AND HE CAN PLAY A MEAN GAME OF TENNIS, BUT SMART? REALLY? YER KIDDIN'! PHILLY? YOU SMART?

"AFTER YOU AND JONRA LEFT, I
CRIED PHILIP, NO, NOT FOR ME AND
MY LOVELINESS... BUT FOR YOU!"

"BOW... THAT GIRL? THAT... JOB...
FEELING! ALL SHE WANTS OF HIM
IS A PLAYMATE AND A LOVER...
NO PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES...
WHILE HIS FINE MIND GOES TO
WASTE!"

"WEDDING BELLS TOLLED HAPPY-
NESS FOR YOU, PHILIP... AWESOME
FOR ME. I WAS YOUR BEST MAN,
OF COURSE, BUT NO LONGER YOUR
BEST FRIEND... CLOSEST COM-
PANION..."

"I'LL LOVE
ANYONE!"

"BYE,
GO-GE!
SEE
YUH."

"GOOD-BYE,
PHIL...
CHORE..."

"AND THEN I SAT ALONE, PHILIP.
EVENING AFTER EVENING... LISTENING
TO THAT AWFUL SILENCE... STARRING AT
YOUR EMPTY CHAIR..."

"PHIL! COME BACK TO
ME. SOB... SOB... PHIL..."

"THOSE BITTER LONELY HOURS, PHILIP... DRAGGING
ME... EACH AN ETERNITY... UNTIL I COULD STAND
IT NO MORE. I WAS READY TO TAKE MY LIFE,
PHILIP... READY TO SLIT MY THROAT WITH ONE OF
MY OWN RAZOR-SHARP SCALPERS, WHEN..."

"THE... ONLY... WAY...
OUT... CHORE..."

"THAT PHONE CALL SAVED ME, PHILIP. IT ALSO SAVED YOU.
IT WAS THE HOSPITAL. AN EMERGENCY OPERATION. MAJOR
LOBOTOMY. IT WAS WHILE I WAS REMOVING THAT DISEASED
PORTION OF THE PATIENT'S BRAIN THAT IT CAME TO ME."

"OF COURSE! THE REAL WAY OUT! THE NOBLEST,
MOST SENSIBLE WAY OUT..."

"I FITTED UP MY BASEMENT WITH EQUIPMENT... MADE
MYSELF AN EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY... STARTED MY
RESEARCH... LOST MYSELF IN MY WORK..."

"LOBOTOMIES HAVE GUT AWAY
WHOLE PORTIONS OF THE BRAIN
THAT WERE DISEASED... POTTED...
TUMORED... THE PART OF THE BRAIN
THAT WAS LEFT CONTAINED TO
CARRY ON THE BODY PROCESSES..."

"I... SPENT TWO YEARS TRACKING DOWN THE ANSWER... AND
THEN I FOUND IT AND MY CHANCE CAME WHEN YOU CALLED
ONE DAY..."

"WHAT? OH, I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT, PHIL! YOU'RE
NOT GOING WITH HER? THEN WHY NOT COME HERE
AND SPEND THE TWO WEEKS WITH ME? GOOD!
I'LL EXPECT YOU, THEN! GOOD-BYE..."

THAT WAS A GREAT, WASN'T IT, PHILIP? JOSEPH HAVING TO GO HOME FOR TWO WEEKS DUE TO AN ILLNESS IN THE FAMILY! IT CAME AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME. I WAS READY...

YOUR MOVE, ANDY? HEH, HEH. JUST LIKE OLD TIMES, EH?

I... I SEE THE SIGNS, PHIL! YOUR MARRIAGE IS FALLING ON YOUR JOSEPH! SURELY YOU, DON'T SHE...?

'REMEMBER HOW YOU TURNED ON ME, ANDY?'

ARE YOU MAD, ANDY? WHERE DO YOU GET SUCH A CRAZY IDEA? I LOVE HER, EVEN IF SHE ISN'T SO BRILLIANT! SHE'S FUN, ANDY! I'VE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY...

POOR Loyal PHILIP! YOU DON'T WANT TO HURT HER, DO YOU? YOU DON'T WANT TO CAST HER ASIDE LIKE THE TRASH SHE WAS FOR WASTING YOUR LIFE... SUFFOCATING YOUR WONDERFUL MIND IN GREASY TRIVIALITIES. WELL, YOU DIDN'T POOL ME, PHILIP. I FITTED YOU, IF FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART...

'AND I SAVE YOU WARNINGS, AS ONE FRIEND TO ANOTHER...'

IF YOU KEEP UP WITH THAT WOMAN... LET HER DRAG YOU DOWN TO HER MORNING DEPTHS... YOU WILL BE DEGRADING YOURSELF!

STOP IT, ANDY! THAT'S ENOUGH! EITHER WE DROP THE SUBJECT OR...

'TOO BAD, PHILIP! TOO BAD YOU WERE SO STUBBORN! IF I'D ONLY CONVINCED YOU...'

ALL RIGHT, PHILIP! NO NEED TO GET ANDY! THE SUBJECT IS CLOSED!

YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT SOME EXPERIMENTS YOU'VE BEEN DOING, ANDY!

OH, YES? COME ALONG! I'VE SET UP A LABORATORY IN THE CELLAR. THIS WAY...

WHY, YOU'VE GOT A GREAT DEAL OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT DOWN HERE, ANDY! DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE WORKING ON MY BACK?...?

NO, PHILIP! I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THEORIES RELATING TO BRAIN SURGERY, RECENTLY, IN FACT... I'M ABOUT READY TO PERFORM MY FIRST SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT LOMOTOMY...

ALL YOU NEED IS THE PATIENT, EH, ANDY?

DOCTOR HOBART LOOKED UP, HIS DREAMY THOUGHTS RETURNED TO THE PRESENT BY THE SHARP HAMBERING ON THE DOOR...

OH, BLAST! I FORGOT!
IT'S THURSDAY! THEY'RE
HERE FOR THEIR WEEKLY
VISIT!

KNOCK
KNOCK

DOCTOR HOBART STEPPED OUT THROUGH THE SLIDING DOORS OF THE LIBRARY, TURNING TO CLOSE THEM.

I'LL BE BACK IN AS
SOON AS THEY'VE GONE,
PHILIP! THEN WE CAN
CONTINUE OUR GAME!

THE LIBRARY DOORS LOCKED, ANDREW BRUING OPEN THE FRONT DOOR...

ALL... PHILIP?
JONDRA! COME
IN... COME IN...

WE CAN'T
STAY LONG
TONIGHT, CAN
WE DEAR?

HUH? OH,
YEAH... I HEAR.
NO, NO! WE CAN'T!

DOCTOR HOBART LED HIS GUESTS PAST THE LIBRARY INTO THE SITTING ROOM...

GOING DANCING AGAIN,
PHILIP? AREN'T YOU
GETTING A LITTLE OLD
FOR THAT?

HUH? MAH, WE
ENJOY DANCING...
DON'T WE, JONDRA?
LOSER FOLK DANCING...

IT WAS A DULL, REGULARITY VISIT WITH JONDRA OBVIOUSLY IMPATIENT TO GO, AND PHIL DOING LITTLE TO CARRY ON ANY CONVERSATION. THIS IS THE WAY IT'S BEEN EVERY WEEK FOR TWENTY YEARS...

WELL, WE REALLY MUST
BE GOING? COME ALONG,
PHILIP?

HUH? OH,
YEAH? BYE,
ANDY? SEE
YOU...

OF COURSE,
PHILIP! NEXT
WEEK? GOOD-BYE...

DOCTOR HOBART LED THEM TO THE FRONT DOOR, WATCHED THEM HURRY DOWN THE WALK TO THEIR WAITING CAR...

THEN HE UNLOCKED THE DOOR AND WENT INTO THE LIBRARY...

YOU KNOW, PHILIP, I DON'T THINK JONDRA NOTICED THE LEAST DIFFERENCE WHEN SHE CAME HOME FROM THAT VISIT TO HER FAMILY TWENTY YEARS AGO. SHE STILL HAS THE THINGS SHE WANTS OF HER HUSBAND, THE PHYSICAL THINGS. SHE'S PERFECTLY SATISFIED WITH YOUR BODY, AND...



... AND TWENTY-FIVE PER-
CENT OF YOUR BRAIN, AND
I'VE GOT THE REAL YOU,
PHILIP... THE IMPORTANT
PART OF YOUR BRAIN... YOUR
CREATIVE ARTISTIC PART...



THE BRAIN FLOATED LAZILY IN THE
JAR OF AMBER LIQUID...

AND SO THE FEARS STRETCH
HAPPILY AHEAD OF US, PHILIP!
YOU AND I... TOGETHER TILL
DEATH... IN MENTAL COMPANION-
SHIP.



DOCTOR HOBART FLIPPED ON THE
VOICE AMPLIFIER SWITCH FOR THE
FIRST TIME THAT EVENING... AND
TURNED THE VOLUME...

ALL RIGHT,
PHILIP! GO
AHEAD! RANT
AND RAVE!

OH, GOD? WHY
DID YOU DO IT?
WHY? I LOVED
HER! I WAS HAPPY
WITH HER! WHY DON'T
YOU BELIEVE ME?



DOCTOR HOBART SHOOK HIS HEAD, SMILING WARMLY
AT THE BRAIN SUSPENDED IN THE MUBBLING LIQUID...

OH, DON'T BE A FOOL, PHILIP! WHY MUST WE
ALWAYS GO THROUGH THIS... EVERY NIGHT...
BEFORE WE CAN SETTLE DOWN TO A NICE QUIET
EVENING? I DID THIS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!
I RESCUED YOU FROM THAT NITBIT FEMALE.
WHY, IF YOU HAD GONE ON LYING WITH HER FOR
THE PAST TWENTY YEARS...



...YOU WOULD
HAVE LOST
YOUR MIND!



IT'S YOU WHO LOST YOUR
MIND, ANOTHER! YOU? YOU'RE
MAD! MAD! AND, OH LORD,
LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO ME!



DOCTOR HOBART REACHED FOR THE VOICE AMPLIFIER SWITCH. THE BRAIN
SEEMED TO TWIST SLIGHTLY AS IT FLOATED BUOYANTLY IN THE JAR.

MUST I TURN YOU OFF, PHILIP, OR WILL YOU
BE GOOD SO WE CAN GO ON WITH OUR GAME?
ER... I BELIEVE IT'S MY MOVE!

NO? WE STOPPED
LAST NIGHT AFTER
YOUR MOVE! IT'S
MY MOVE...



HEH, HEH! WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT A
WEDDING OF MINDS? CERTAINLY
SOUNDS LIKE THE MAD DOCTOR
AND HIS BOTTLED BRAIN ARE
MARRIED. LISTEN TO THEM ARGUE
ABOUT WHO GOES FIRST, AND
YOU'LL ARGUE ABOUT WHO GOES
FIRST... TO JOIN THE E.G. FAN
JOCKEYS... THAT IS... WHEN YOU
SEE THE STUFF YOU CAN GET, LIKE
BACK ISSUES

WHEN YOU WRITE US
FOR ORDERING
INFO. NOW, THE
HOUSE-KEEPER
DEALS WITH A
FAIRLY TO DRIVE
ALL YOU MARRIAGE
GAMES. I'LL SEE
YOU LATER!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HER, HERE AND NOW THAT G.K. HAS DRILLED YOUR BLOOD WITH HIS GRIFTY GAPE, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO FREEZE IT! YEP, IT'S YOUR HOET IN THE VAULT OF HORROR, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH A VISIT TO AN INSANE ASYLUM. I CALL THIS MAD OLUMPTIYARN... THIS TALE OF FEAR IS TOTTA IN THE BOOBY-NATCH...

COME BACK, LITTLE LINDA!

HE OLD MAN SAT IN THE DAMP DARKNESS OF HIS TUSTEY-PRANDUM ASYLUM CELL, SOBBING QUIETLY. HE SAT WITH WIDE STARRING EYES AND CLENCHED FISTS AMID THE FOUL ODOR OF DECAY AND PUT AND UNREMOVED HUMAN EXCREMENTS. AND HE CALLED HER NAME. SOTTO. SOTTO.

LINDA! LINDA! COME
BACK TO ME, LINDA...



DOCTOR MORGAN ULLMAN, THE DIRECTOR OF THE COUNTY INSANE ASYLUM, MOVED SLOWLY THROUGH THE DARK OIL PASSAGEWAY LINED ON EITHER SIDE WITH ANCIENT OAKEN DUNGEON DOORS. AND THERE WAS A FAINT SMILE ON HIS HARD COLD FACE. HIS ASSISTANT, ERIC HAGEN, FOLLOWED CLOSE BEHIND.

IT WAS A STROKE OF GENIUS, ERIC, MAKING USE OF THESE OLD DUNGEON CELLS. DID I EVER TELL YOU FOR GIVING ME THE IDEA?

THE MONEY YOU PAY ME IS THUNDER ENOUGH, DOCTOR ULLMAN!



DOCTOR ULLMAN STOPPED AT ONE OF THE METAL DOORS. HE SELECTED A KEY FROM THE RING HE CARRIED...

WELL, THE MONEY I PAY YOU IS THE LEAST I CAN DO, ERIC. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN, BOY?

TWO YEARS, DOCTOR ULLMAN!

THE DOCTOR INSERTED THE KEY INTO THE LOCK AND TWISTED. THE BOLT SNAPPED OPEN. THE DOCTOR LAUGHED...

TWO YEARS, BUT IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE WE EMPTIED THE BARRS AND HERDED ALL THE INMATES INTO THESE DUNGEON CELLS?

YES, BUT TWO YEARS!

THE DOCTOR TURNED TO ERIC, WHO TOWERED OVER HIM, TALL AND GRIN AND MUSCULAR...

DO YOU REALIZE HOW MANY SHEETS WE DIDN'T HAVE TO BUY IN TWO YEARS, ERIC? HOW MANY BLANKETTES?

QUITE A LOT, BUT...

THE DOCTOR PUSHED OPEN THE SQUEALING METAL DOOR...

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WE'VE SAVED ON LAUNDRY... CLEANING... FOOD...

QUITE A LOT, SIR.

THE OLD MAN SAT IN THE DEEP DARKNESS OF HIS CELL, WHISPERING SOFTLY...

LINDA? WHERE DID YOU GO, LINDA? LINDA...?

YOU SAY HE CALLS THAT NAME CONSTANTLY...

ALMOST ALL THE TIME, SIR.

THE DOCTOR SHOOK THE OLD MAN. THE OLD MAN TURNED WITH HIM, STARING EYES...

WHO IS LINDA, YOU OLD FOOL?

LINDA? LINDA? LINDA IS MY LOVE!

PROBABLY SOMEONE IN HIS PAST, DOCTOR!

THE DOCTOR UNRAILED THE NAUSEATING DOOR OF THE DARK CELL, AND PETCHED...

LINDA, MY LOVE! COME TO ME!

PER? CHOKE... PROBABLY? LET'S SAY... GET OUT OF HERE. HE'S BEYOND HELP!

WE'RE GOING TO CLEAN THESE CELLS OUT, DOCTOR... BEFORE AN EPIDEMIC BREAKS OUT...

THEY SLAMMED THE CELL DOOR SHUT AND MOVED BACK UP THE CORRIDOR...

PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, ERIC! A DEAD INMATE MEANS WE LOSE HIS ALLOTMENT, AND WE DON'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN, DO WE?

I'LL HAVE THE MORE RATIONAL INMATES DO THE CLEANING, DOCTOR. IT'LL SAVE HAVING TO HIRE ANYBODY...



...OFF THE WHIRLING STONE STEPS LEADING TO THE ASYLUM BUILDINGS ABOVE...

YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT BEING ECONOMICAL, ERIC. I'M PROUD OF YOU.

EVERY BRICK SAVED MEANS FORTY CENTS FOR ME! WHY SHOULDN'T I BE?



...AND OUT THROUGH THE DESERTED MUSTY WARDS, DOCTOR ULLMAN STOPPED AT A FILTHY WINDOW, LOOKING OUT...

IT'S TIME TO TURN ON THE LIGHTS, ERIC. WE WANT EVERYBODY DOWN THERE TO THINK THE WARDS ARE STILL OCCUPIED.

VERY WELL, DO THAT RIGHT NOW...



FAR BELOW THE CLEAN GREY INSANE ASYLUM, DOWN IN THE VALLEY, LIGHTS BLINKED ON AS TWILIGHT TURNED TO NIGHT. THE PEOPLE IN THEIR CLEAN WHITE HOUSES SAT AT CLEAN WHITE TABLES AND ATE FROM CLEAN WHITE DISHES AND NEVER DREAMED OF THE HORRORS GOING ON ABOVE THEM...



THEY NEVER HEARD THE UNMUTED SCREAMS OF THE INMATES IN THEIR SLIMY STINKING DUNGEON CELLS... NEVER FELT THE STING OF ERIC'S WHIP...



THEY NEVER TASTED THE DISH WATER SOUP... THE SPOILED BLOP MEAT... THAT WAS FED TO THE INMATES. WHAT HAPPENED, ERIC?

HE COMPLAINED, BOB. WHY DID YOU HAVE TO WHIP HIM?

HE COMPLAINED, BOB. BUT HE DIDN'T LIKE THE MEAL TONIGHT!



OH! WELL, IF HE DOESN'T LIKE WHAT WE SERVE HIM, DON'T GIVE HIM ANY FOR A WHILE. HE'LL APPRECIATE IT, AFTER... SAY... THREE DAYS!

NO! NO! I PLEASE I'LL... STARVE! I'M SORRY... BOB. I'M SORRY...



ALL RIGHT LONG, IN THE WARD, THE STINKING WHIP ROSE AND FELL, UPON THE WALLING INMATES ON...



MAYBE WE OUGHT TO PUT HIM BACK DOWN THERE... IN THE DUNGEON!

NO! WE CAN'T AFFORD IT! THEY MAY HAVE A COURT!



THE INMATES COVERED IN FEAR AND TERROR. THERE WAS UNDERSTANDING IN THEIR EYES. EACH ONE OF THEM KNEW THAT THE DOCTOR WANTED BUSINESS. THERE WOULD BE NO SLIPS OF THE TONGUE FROM ANY OF THEM...

F-FEE, (DOCTOR) W-WE WON'T SAY A WORD! NOT A WORD! ALL RIGHT! NOW GET BACK TO YOUR ROOM!



ALL THE POOR ASYLUM PATIENTS SCURRIED ABOUT WITH PAIS AND WOPS AND POLISHING CLOTHS...CLEANING THE LONG-ABANDONED WARD, ALL, THAT IS, EXCEPT THE OLD MAN WHO SAT IN A CORNER SOBING SOFTLY...



BUT HE COULD CARE! HE'S A FRODOBLE! HIM AND HIS STUPID LINDA! MAYBE HE'LL TALK! MAYBE HE'LL TELL THEM WHERE HE'S BEEN KEPT FOR TWO YEARS!

HE'S A BARBLING IDIOT! WHO'LL LISTEN TO THE JABBERING OF A RAVING MANIAC...



DOCTOR MILLMAN TURNED TO THE OTHER INMATES... HE BRANDISHED THE WHIP...

ONE WORD... ONE HINT FROM ANY OF YOU THAT YOU'VE BEEN MISTREATED IN THE SLIGHTEST DEGREE... AND YOU'LL REGRET IT...



ONLY THE OLD MAN, OBLIVIOUS TO EVERYTHING, CONTINUED TO SIGH...

I WANT MY LINDA! I WANT MY... SHUT UP, YOU OLD FOOL! LEAVE HIM BE, ERIC. YAAAAHHHHH...



IN THE MORNING, THE WARDS WERE SPARKLING CLEAN, EACHES WAS MADE WITH FRESH CLEAN SHEETS AND SPOTLESS BLANKETS. THE INMATES HAD ALL BEEN BATHED AND DRESSED IN NEW UNIFORMS. EVERYTHING WAS READY FOR THE BOARD'S INSPECTION, AND THEN...



THEY NOTED THE TEMPTING DOORS DRIFTING FROM THE KITCHEN...THE SLEAMING BRASS OF THE BEDS...THE IMMACULATE CONDITION OF THE WARDS...

YOU MUST BE COMFORTABLE, DR. ULLMAN. THE ASYLUM SEEMS TO BE EXTREMELY WELL RUN. ARE THE PATIENTS HAPPY?



SUDDENLY THE WARD NOISEDRAVED WITH AN AMBUSHED CRY...



THEY MOVED THROUGH THE ASYLUM, SMILING, CRITICAL-MINDED, EYES EVERYWHERE.



THEY WENT FROM BED TO BED...TALKING TO THE INMATES...INQUIRING...



THE OLD MAN SAT UP STARRING WILDLY...



HE CLIMBED FROM HIS BED...



THE OLD MAN SCAMPERS ACROSS THE WARD, DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO THE CELLAR DOOR...



...DOWN THE WHIRLING STONE STEPS, THE BOARD FOLLOWED...



ALONG THE DIM DARK PASSAGEWAY...



THE BOARD MEMBERS PEERED INTO THE CELL, WHERE THE OLD MAN SAT COOING HAPPILY. THEY SMILED. THEY SAW THE TELL-TALE SIGNS... SMELLED THE TELL-TALE COORS.



BEHIND THEM, THE OTHER INMATES WERE COMING DOWN THE STONE STEPS, MARCHING ALONG THE PASSAGEWAY, FILING INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE DUNGEON CELLS...



THE BOARD MEMBER MOTIONED TO THE OLD MAN'S CELL, OR ULLMAN LOOKED... THEN PAID. HE WAS IN THERE ALL RIGHT... COOING AT LINDA, WHISPERING WORDS OF ENCHANTMENT TO HIS LOVE...



LINDA THE OLD MAN'S LOVE, WAS A BIG FAT UGLY FOUR-ARMED LARD...

"WEE, HEE!"



HEH, HEH! YEP! IT'S... THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

President and CEO—Stephen A. Gappi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear CRYPT,

I love your comics and your tests of words. I am a witty gut-twisting fan of your comics. I love CRYPT #10, "Grounds For Horror." People should not let little kids work because it just drives them crazy. They seem to make up stories of who really did their killing.

Keep printing your stories. You have a very horror-hunger fan club out here. It's ok to print my address and zip code, I'm dying for a gut-bustin' pal.

Orlando Garcia

829 W Superior ST
Chicago, IL 60622

May I suggest a truce?

—CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

Hi! It's Shawn again. I have almost all your comics. All I need is 5 more. Anyway, how are you? I wanted to ask you something, WHY is your show not on anymore? I am very disappointed.

My brother threw a party when he heard you weren't on anymore, and I got a huge poster of the HBO version of you. You're the last thing I see before I go to bed! Well, I gotta go.

Shawn Van Ellis

Philadelphia, PA

This is your late brother if promises.

—CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

It is its genre, each issue of your eerie covers. Before doing on this one, #24, I realized it represented 3 1/2% of the entirety.

On page 5 of "Food for Thought", there is an invisible robe that Merta slips on. Perhaps it's the emperor's new robe? Ye know, at the turn of page 7, I figured Merta was targeted for the final twist instead of Carl.

In "Pearly to Dead", I guess Larry finally had his fill of Phil.

Bob Gorty

Camarillo, CA

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I have two dozen comics and a toy of you.

Jeep Lovelace

Anchorage, AK



I have two Ellen comics and a fan BN you! I'm a lucky dog!
—CK

So "The Crypt-Keeper's Corner"

In issue #24: "Food for Thought" page 7 panel 7, who is Martin? It is Merta in the other 47 panels.

The caption on panel 8 page 4 of the story "Pearly to Dead" reads: "They both talked in love with her. . ." (who missed the "D" key on the typewriter?)

It's quite a coincidence that in 1954 CK used the word "Merta" in the intro to the story "Pearly Schooner", because in 1995 that word is the talk of the land.

In "Half-Saked!" The Old Witch says that membership in the EC-FanAddict Club is limited to 250,000,000 people. That's almost the entire population of the United States, that's a lot of Addict! It's a nationwide epidemic!

David Deltano

Warrington, CT

Let's slip you into a buried box and check YOUR resurrection, David-baby! The "Titanic" disaster was common enough in the popular mind for the first 65 years, imagine if our report of WERD SCIENCE 8 had appeared in the last six months!
—CK

Dear CK

"Undertaking Pator", #24, seems to touch on a lot of taboo subjects for a 50c comic, death and its consequences in the form of the mortuary, murder of innocents by an unscrupulous druggist in collusion with the mortician, a sheriff's loss of a parent, and the subsequent revenge by a group of kids on the evil grocer who defying authority in the process) and, finally, violent assault and murder in a graveyard. The kids witnessing the graveyard murder is straight out of HUCKLEBERRY FINN. Quite an intricate plot for a 'lowly' comic book!

How original (and typical) of EC to have a story narrated by a grave ("The Graving Grave")! This is one of the traits that put EC above all others in its day, and continues to 40 years hence!

EC's retelling of "The Sleeping Beauty" results, instead, reveals a tired old fairy tale with sloppy logic and a Transylvanian twist.

Barry McCollum

Alton, IL

I wondered "whatever happened to my Transylvanian Twist?"
—CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

"Tales from the Crypt" #4 was great. Here's my review of it:

The cover Jack Davis does what Jack Davis does best, he impresses EC fans, and often even sells comics to fans of non-EC comics and people who watch the TV show. The ink are pathetic, though.

"Food for Thought": This story is pretty good, and is better than the TV episode, which has very, very little to do with this comic story. The next three stories are all about the ocean, or at least have something to do the ocean.

"Pearly to Dead": This is a great story with great artwork. I like how George Evans carefully drew his stories with fine line and shadow. I really like the part when Phil and Larry are clearing the way for the US Navy to blow up Japan, and I LOVE the panel where Larry sees Phil's rotted face through the porthole, because it's very creepy Great story!

"Pine's Schizophren": This is not a bad story, but I don't like Bernie Kingstain's art. It's boring and ugly. If an artist with style, like Jack Davis, Johnny Craig, Graham Ingels, George Evans or Jack Kamen illustrated this story it would have been much better.

"Half-Baked!": The creepy ocean thing is wearing off a little bit, and yet, this still manages to be the best story in the book! The ocean scenes are great. Graham Ingels is a wonderful artist.

Too bad he never drew you or The Vault-Keeper Jack Davis, usually the artist who's supposed to draw you, has drawn The Vault-Keeper and The Old Witch before; Johnny Craig, who's mostly known for drawing The Vault-Keeper, has drawn (and painted) you and The Old Witch before; but Graham Ingels, who's known for making the stupid, annoying character some people call The Old Witch worth looking at, has never drawn you or The Vault-Keeper. How sad! You and The Vault-Keeper are much better, much more original characters than The Old Witch, and I hate the title of her comic. A "Crypt of Terror" makes sense, a "Vault of Horror" makes sense, but a "Vault of Fear" doesn't. A "Vault" is not a type of creepy place.

Questions: 1) Who's version of you is the most accurate, Al Feldstein, Jack Davis, Johnny Craig, Jack Kamen, the Archaic film or Kevin Kline, who created the TV version of you? 2) Are you related to The Vault-Keeper at all, even distantly? 3) Who is the oldest Ghoul-Lord? PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS SERIOUSLY AND HONESTLY!!!

Zeke Stern

Encinitas, CA

Did you know if you play Lennon saying, "Charlie and The Deathkads" from the LET IT BE album backwards he says "Oh! Soaring past the porthole!"

We slip the entire mailorder staff in liquid Mylar twice a year, when we spray them for ticks.

If you were a habitue of The Old Witch's haunts, as I unwillingly am, you'd agree they're mighty creepy!

Only Jack Davis captured the pure physical power and ethereal grace that is me!

-CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

It's me, Monsterman, again. I just read your latest ish, #23, yesterday.

"Undertaking Peter" was great, up to the nice little poetic justice at the end. Still more proof that Jack Davis was the greatest of the EC artists.

"The Drowning Grief" was good, but it just felt like a remake of that one about the trunk. Besides, that thing about "earth worms" was way too necrophiliac.

Your version of "Sleeping Beauty" was funny, particularly the character of "Melen"? I look forward to see how they do it on your show.

"Shadow of a Doubt" was too good a story for that old bet, The Old Witch. Who'da think that a shadow could kill someone? That's something to try on those dog days of summer.

Monsterman

address unknown

Er, you mean "Shadow of Death", no doubt. DON'T try it during a solar eclipse! Only the late Jack Davis could do complete justice to the "Melen"? line (but that shouldn't be a problem for me, should it?).

-CK

Also, include this month are PMAC and PRACY #11 each for \$24.95, TWO-PICTED and VALOR next month! Don't forget HAUNT FRONTLINE COMBAT and CRIME. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see end ad for full details for details).

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Add \$5 per order (\$14 outside US) for S&H

Write to:
CRYPT
GEMSTONE
POB 446
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS
TALES FROM THE CRYPT #41* (#38, APR/MAY 84)
COVER by Jack Davis
"Operation Friendship" Jack Davis
"Come Back, Little Uncle" George Evans
"Current Attraction" Jack Kamen
"Mass Call" Graham Ingels

We warrant letters of copyright. We cannot promise to acknowledge, address or answer letters. We will be happy to return any letters. We acknowledge all letters and will return any letters within the month. We will also return any letters. We warrant to acknowledge all letters. We will be happy to return any letters. We warrant to acknowledge all letters.

I CALL THIS ELECTRIFYING YARN...

CURRENT ATTRACTION



AGE HAS CREEPT UP ON OLD RUPE AND STIFFENED HIS JOINTS AND SLACKENED HIS MUSCLES AND FINALLY HE'S BEEN FORCED TO CLIMB DOWN FROM THE FLYING TRAPEZES WHERE FOR ALMOST A QUARTER OF A CENTURY HE'D REIGNED AS KING. NO MORE WOULD THE BAND PLAY AND THE DRUMS ROLL AND THE AUDIENCE SAP AS THE SPOTLIGHT FOLLOWED HIM ACROSS THE BIG TOP IN HIS DEATH-DEFYING AERIAL ACT. HE WAS A *HAS-BEEN*... A *FORGOTTEN NAME*... A *FADED STAR*. HIS PERFORMING DAYS WERE OVER. BUT THE CIRCUS WAS IN OLD RUPE'S BLOOD. IT WAS HIS LIFE. AND SO HE'D STAYED ON... ENTERING THE ANIMALS, HELPING THE RINGMASTERS, DOING ANY ODD-JOB AVAILABLE... JUST SO HE COULD BE NEAR THE TRAMMER AND THE TAMARU AND THE CANYON WORLD HE LOVES. AND THEN THERE WAS JEAN... RUPE'S DAUGHTER. THERE WAS JEAN'S *FUTURE* TO CONSIDER...



JEAN HAD BEEN TEN WHEN HER MOTHER HAD MISSED HER DOUBLE FORWARD SUMMERSWALT AND CAME CRASHING DOWN TO THE BIG TOP FLOOR... LEAVING JEAN AN ORPHAN AND RUPE A WIDOWER. THAT HAD BEEN EIGHT YEARS AGO...



OLD RUPE FINGERED THE NET-POLE NERVOUSLY AS IF HE WERE AFRAID IT MIGHT SUDDENLY VANISH, LEAVING HIS PRECIOUS DAUGHTER SWINGING ALONE UP THERE WITHOUT ITS LIFE-PRESERVING PROTECTION...



FOR A MOMENT OLD RUPE'S HEART STOPPED BEATING AS HE WATCHED HIS LOVELY DAUGHTER'S BODY FLAIL, THEN PLUMBE DOWNWARD. IT WAS AN OLD MEMORY, ONE THAT HE WOULD NEVER FORGET.

IT'S...IT'S ALL RIGHT, HONEY! RELAX! RELAX WHEN YOU HIT!

JEAN SOBBERD AS SHE CLIMBED DOWN FROM THE NET AND REACHED FOR THE CAPE HER FATHER HELD OUT FOR HER...

I'LL...I'LL NEVER BE ANY GOOD, DADDY! NEVER! DON'T WHY DON'T WE EYE UP?

YOU'LL DO IT, HONEY! YOU'LL SEE! YOU'LL BE A STAR SOME DAY!



THEY WALKED IN SILENCE ACROSS THE TANNAPARK FLOOR, DOWN BETWEEN THE SEATS, AND OUT INTO THE SUN-LIGHT...

A TALL, HANDSOME, DARK-EYED MAN CAME STRIDING ACROSS THE BROADWAY, GRINNING BROADLY...

BO! I SEE YOU HAVE BEEN PRACTISING, LOVELY ONE! THAT IS GOOD!

I'LL NEVER BE ANY GOOD, ENRICO!

YOU'LL BE SOME SOME-DAY!

DON'T TALK THAT WAY! WHY, WHEN YOUR MOTHER AND HE STARTED...

OH, ENRICO! THIS IS MY DADDY! EVERYBODY CALL HIM 'RUPE'!

A PLEASURE TO MEET THE FATHER OF SUCH A CHARMING SON, MR. EN... RUPE!



RUPE STUDIED THE GRAY-LOOKING STRANGER.

YOU'RE NEW AROUND HERE, AREN'T YOU? WHAT'S YOUR ACT?

ENRICO IS A STAR, DADDY! HE USUALLY GETS TOP BILLING! HE JUST JOINED OUR CIRCUS YESTERDAY! HE'S A KNIFE-THROWER!

I ALSO THROW THE MACHETE AND THE CLEAVER.

ENRICO TURNED TO JEAN.

I WILL SEE YOU LATER, THEN... AS WE PLANNED. NO REVISIT.

ALL RIGHT, ENRICO! SEE, FOR NOW!

WINKING!



OLD RUFE AND HIS DAUGHTER
WALKED ON IN SILENCE UNTIL THEY
CAME TO THEIR TRAILER, THEN...

I DON'T LIKE
HIM! HE'S A
BREAD-LOOKIN'
CHARACTER!

HE'S VERY
SWEET, DADDY...
AND VERY
MUNDANE-
STOOD! HIS
WIFE...

OLD RUFE SPUN AROUND...

HIS WIFE IF HE'S
MARRIED?

OH, YES! HIS
WIFE IS HIS
PARTNER IN
THE ACT! SHE
STANDS UP
AGAINST A
BOARD AND
HE...

I'LL NOT HAVE
MY DAUGHTER
GOING OUT
WITH A MARRI-
ED MAN!

DON'T BE SILLY,
DADDY! WE'RE
JUST FRIENDS!
NOTHING MORE!
HE'S VERY UN-
HAPPY!

THAT NIGHT, RUFE CAUGHT ENRICO'S ACT. IT WAS QUITE SENSATIONAL! HIS WIFE WOULD STAND SPREAD-EAILED BEFORE A BOARD AND HE'D COOLLY KISS HER WITH KNIVES, THROWING THEM IN RAPID SUCCESSION, ENDING UP WITH A CLEAVER BLAMING INTO THE WOOD BEHIND HER HEAD...

BRAVO!

GREAT! TERRIFIC!

GOOD!

ISN'T HE
LORD? WONDER-
FUL, DADDY?

I'D HATE TO
BE HIS WIFE
AND HAVE
HIM SORE
AT MY ONE
SLIP...

THAT'S JUST IT, DADDY!
THEY DON'T GET ALONG!
HE'S NOT IN LOVE
WITH HER ANY LONGER.
BUT SHE REFUSES TO
GIVE HIM A DIVORCE!

AND YOU MEAN
TO TELL ME
SHE LETS HIM
STAND THERE
AND THROW
KNIVES AT
HER?

ISN'T SHE HORRIBLE?
ENRICO IS A MURDEROUS
WRECK! HE DOESN'T WANT
TO HARM A HAIR ON HER
HEAD, THAT MAKES IT ALL
THE MORE DIFFICULT
FOR HIM!

HOW COME YOU'RE
SO INTERESTED IN
HIS PRIVATE LIFE?

I... I THINK I'M IN
LOVE WITH ENRICO,
DADDY!

WHAT? IN LOVE WITH HIM? DON'T
BE A FOOL, JEAN! YOU'RE TOO
YOUNG! WHAT ABOUT YOUR CAREER?
IN ANOTHER FEW MONTHS, YOUR ACT
WILL BE BE FINE AND YOU'LL BE ON YOUR
WAY! LOVE ISN'T FOR YOU! NOT
NOW!

JEAN SHOOK HER HEAD...

I'M SORRY, DADDY! I CAN'T JUST TURN MY HEART OFF LIKE A RADIO! WHEN IT HAPPENS, IT HAPPENS! AND YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT!

YOU CAN AVOID LETTING IT HAPPEN! YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK FOR IT!



JEAN SMILED AT HER FATHER AND STARTED OFF ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS...

IT'S TOO LATE, DADDY! IT'S ALREADY HAPPENED!

JEAN! COME BACK! JEAN!



HE COULD SEE THEM IN THE MOON-LIGHT, MEETING AND WALKING OFF... ARM IN ARM... HIS DAUGHTER, AND ENRICO...

NO, JEAN! NO! I WON'T LET YOU RUN YOUR LIFE! I'VE WORRIED TOO LONG AND TOO HARD WITH YOU TO LET YOU THROW IT AWAY!



THAT NIGHT, OLD RUFUS TRIED TO WAIT UP FOR HIS DAUGHTER TO COME HOME. HE REMEMBERED THE CLOCK HANDS POINTING TO THREE BEFORE HE DOZED OFF... AND WHEN HE AWOKE, IT WAS MORNING, AND JEAN WAS SLEEPING SOUNDLY...

THIS CANNOT GO ON! IT'S INSANE! I'VE GOT TO TALK TO HIM...



RUFUS DRESSED ABRUSLY AND HURRIED ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS TO THE TRAILER MARKED 'THE GREAT ENRICO'. HE HAMMERED ON THE DOOR.

JEAN? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

YOUR... YOUR MOTHER... I WANT TO SEE HER... ALONE!



ENRICO'S WIFE WAS A TIRED-EYES BLEACHED GLOUGE WHO REEKED OF LIQUOR. SHE STEPPED OUT OF THE TRAILER AND SMILED...

SURE, OLD MAN! ONLY YOU'LL HAVE TO WAKE HIM UP. HE WAS OUT ALL NIGHT LAST NIGHT. HE'S STILL ASLEEP.

TH-THANK YOU!



OLD RUFUS LEANED OVER THE SLEEPING ENRICO AND SHOOK HIM ROUGHLY...

HUH? WHO... WHAT... YAWN... WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU! ABOUT MY DAUGHTER! I WANT YOU TO LEAVE HER ALONE!



THE GREAT ENRICO STRODE ABOUT THE TRAILER IN A FLAKY LOUNGING ROBE, PUFFING ON A LONG CHARETTE HOLDER, LISTENING TO OLD RUPE PLEAD WITH HIM...

SHE IS YOUNG... *IMMA* PERISHED. SHE HAS HER WHOLE LIFE AHEAD OF HER. I SEE OF YOU...



I AM *JOHNNY*, BEHON! I CANNOT WAKE UP YOUR DAUGHTER!

ENRICO SMILED...

I FIND HER TOO ATTRACTIVE?

I... I'M WARNING YOU, ENRICO!



DO NOT *THREATEN* ME, ALL RIGHT! OLD MAN. IF YOUR DAUGHTER ASKED AND I CANNOT FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR *WASSER-REDS*... THEN IT SHALL BE WITHOUT THEM! *GOOD DAY!*

YOU IN A *MISE* MISE? NOW ... LOOK OUT!



OLD RUPE LEFT ENRICO'S TRAILER AND STAMPEDED ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS, PUMPH... HE CAME INTO THE BIG TOP, HIS MIND WHIRLING...

I CAN'T LET HIM *WRECK MY* JEANNIE'S LIFE! I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HIM! I'VE...



THE BOARD THAT THE GREAT ENRICO USED IN HIS ACT STOOD IN ITS POSITION IN THE CENTER RING, READY FOR THE NIGHT'S PERFORMANCE. OLD RUPE STUDIED ITS FITTED AND SCARRED SURFACE...

HMPH! YOU CAN ALMOST OUTLINE THE SILHOUETTE OF ENRICO'S WIFE FROM ALL THESE *KNIFE MARKS*! AND THE *CLEANER MARK* IS... IS...



ENRICO'S VOICE RANG IN OLD RUPE'S EAR...

I FIND HER... TOO ATTRACTIVE?

OF COURSE! THAT'S IT! ATTRACTION! THAT'S IT!



OLD RUPE LET HIMSELF INTO THE ELECTRICIAN'S SHED WITHOUT BEING SEEN. HE DRUNKLED SOFTLY TO HIMSELF...

EVERYONE KNOWS ENRICO NO LONGER LOVES HIS WIFE. EVERYONE KNOWS SHE WON'T GIVE HIM A DIVORCE. SO... WHAT BETTER WAY TO GET RID OF HER...



RUFUS CARRIED THE COIL OF FIRE COPPER WIRE AND THE BAR OF SOFT IRON BACK TO THE BIG-TOP.

TOMORROW...TOMORROW ENRICO THROWS THE CLEAVER DIRECTLY AT HIS WIFE'S HEAD... SPLITTING IT OPEN... KILLING HER. IT WILL BE SO OBVIOUS! HE WILL BE CHARGED WITH MURDER! ALL THE EVIDENCE WILL POINT TO IT! EVEN JEAN WILL HAVE TO TESTIFY AGAINST HIM!



...AND SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, RUFUS WOUND THE COPPER WIRE AROUND THE IRON CORE, CREATING A POWERFUL ELECTRO-MAGNET. THEN HE SECURED THE MAGNET TO THE REAR OF THE TARGET BOARD, EXACTLY BEHIND WHERE ENRICO'S WIFE'S HEAD ALWAYS RESTED.

THERE! NOW...TO ATTACH THE WIRES TO A STRONG CURRENT...AND WE'RE SET! WHEN HE THROWS THAT CLEAVER...



THAT'S RIGHT, THE SHOW BEGAN AS USUAL. OLD RUFUS STOOD BY, WAITING FOR ENRICO'S ACT TO BEGIN...

HE GOES ON IN THIRTY SECONDS!

HEY, RUFUS! I GOT A JOB FOR YOU! C'MON!

ME...



THE HOUTABOUT FOREMAN LED RUFUS OUT OF THE BIG TOP BEHIND. THE DRUMS ROLLED...THE SYMBOLS CLASHED...

THAT'S...THAT'S ENRICO'S ACT STARTING! I WANTED TO SEE IT! I...

YOU'LL SEE IT TOMORROW! THIS IS MORE IMPORTANT! I OWE THIS SOMEBODY A FAVOR!



RUFUS FOLLOWED THE FOREMAN ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS. A FIGURE STOOD IN THE MOONLIGHT, WAITING...

HELP THIS GAL CARRY HER BAGS DOWN TO THE STATION, EN, RUFUS!

I-FOU! YES!

NO! I'M LEAVING HIM! YOUR DAUGHTER CONVINCED ME!



RUFUS'S BLOOD FROZE! THE DRUMS WERE BUILDING UP TO A CRESCENDO NOW. THE END OF THE GREAT ENRICO'S ACT WAS AT HAND. RUFUS COULD SEE THE CLEAVER RAISED...SEE IT FLYING THROUGH THE AIR...SEE IT WAVER AS IT ENTERED THE MAGNETIC FIELD...SEE IT SWERVE INWARD...CUTTING...SPLITTING...THE BLOOD...THE RED RAW FLESH AND BONE...THE BRAINS...

CHUCK...AND

SHE? JEAN? MY DAUGHTER?

SHE'S TAKING MY PLACE IN THE ACT, YOU! C'MON! LET'S GO!



HEY, HEH! SO IF ANYBODY'S INTERESTED IN A SLIGHTLY USED, BROOD-AND-KNOT-FORGERS BOARD, IT'S AVAILABLE. ONLY THIS IS, IT'S A BIT STAINED! OF COURSE, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, IT OUGHT TO BE USED THAT WAY! SORT OF JOSS SOMETHING, DON'T YOU THINK? AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO TURN YOU OVER TO THE OLD WITON, WHO WILL BRING UP MY BORNED MAN FOR THIS ISSUE. OH! REMEMBER THE E.G. FAN ABOUT CLIM? DON'T DO NOTHING! JUST REMEMBER IT!

BYE!



BEHIND THEM CRASHES CRASHED, AND A BASS DRUM BOOMED THE GRAND FINALE!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE WITH YOUR TONGUES HANGING OUT! COME IN! COME INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR! I'VE GOT ANOTHER SLIME-SERVING BREWING IN MY CAULDRON, ALL READY TO DISH OUT. YEP! IT'S ME, AGAIN... THE OLD WITCH! HEE, HEE! HUNGRY FOR HORROR, ARE YOU? GOOD! THEN CLOSE YOUR DILATED NOSTRILS AND OPEN YOUR LITTLE LICKING MOUTHS AND I'LL SPOIL IN YOUR FACE... THIS IS HANS BRUNER'S HEERING RECIPE... VINTAGE 1981. LISTEN, NOW, TO THE TASTY TALE OF TERROR HANS DALLS...

MESS CALL

WOLFEY

Ahhh! IT IS WARM AND DRY HERE... IT IS GOOD TO FEEL WARM AND DRY. I AM SO TIRED... SO VERY TIRED... AND MY EYES ARE HEAVY WITH SLEEP. I CLOSE THEM I SLEEP...

COME, CORPORAL! WAKE UP! ON YOUR FEET! I HAVE FOR YOU AN IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT! COME AT ONCE!



I AM GOING OUT THERE AGAIN. I DO NOT LIKE IT OUT THERE. IT IS WET AND COLD OUT THERE. HERE IT IS WARM AND DRY...

...YOU WILL PROCEED TO AREA H IN 10 YOU WILL DATE YOUR REPORT NOW! 21, 30, 17... AND THE EXACT HOUR THAT IS IMPORTANT!

YES, OVERLEUTENANT!



I AM CRAWLING ON MY BELLY THROUGH THE MUD. IT IS COLD AND DAMP AND I SHIVER AND MY TEETH CHATTER. I BRIP MY GUNNER TIGHTER. I AM APPROACHING AREA 14 NOW. I MUST BE QUIET. *THEY ARE THERE... THE ENEMY...*



THEY ARE JUST OVER THAT HILL AHEAD. I WILL HIDE IN THIS SHELL-HOLE. I MUST BE QUIET...



'NOW IS, BUT, 10:40 P.M. ENEMY POSITION 14 IS IN MY REAR...' I STOP WRITING MY REPORT. I LISTEN. SOMEONE IS HERE... HERE IN THIS SHELL-HOLE... WITH ME...

HE COMES AT ME... AN ENEMY SOLDIER. I BRING MY GUNNER AROUND, BENDING MY BARREL UP HIS SOFT BELLY... PLUNGING IT UPWARD... FEELING THE CRUNCH-ING BONE... HEARING THE SUCKING SOUND...

I AM FRIGHTENED. HIS ARMS SWING OUTWARD. I PULL MY BARREL AND THRUST AGAIN... STABBING. SLASHING. CUTTING HIM TO PIECES. I SEE HIS FACE... HIS EYES... AND THE BLOOD POURING... AND I AM SICK...



HE... HE IS DEAD? AND NOW MY ORIELLEUTANT IS CALLING ME. CALLING ME BACK. EVERYTHING IS FADING. NO? IT IS NOT MY ORIELLEUTANT CALLING ME. IT IS THE DOCTOR'S VOICE. I AM BACK WHERE IT IS WARM AND DRY.



THE DOCTOR IS TALKING TO THAT MAN ABOUT ME...

SO... YOU HAVE BEEN FOR YOURSELF HERE HENRIKON. IT IS ALWAYS THE SAME VIOLENT NIGHTMARE? HE DREAMS VIVIDLY, EACH NIGHT OF THAT EXPERIENCE IN THE FRENCHES? IT HAUNTS HIM? HOWEVER, HE IS PERFECTLY STRONG AND HEALTHY IN EVERY OTHER RESPECT. SO YOU NEED NOT HAVE ANY FEARS...



I WAS ASLEEP, BUT I AM AWAKE
NOW. IT IS MORNING AND THE DOCTOR
IS TALKING TO HERR HEINRICH...



...AND SO I HAVE
ARRANGED EVERY-
THING! YOU MAY
TAKE HIM TODAY!
I NEED NOT TELL
YOU HOW *WIRTS-
FOL* WE ARE!

ACH! I AM
GLAD TO
DO THIS
FOR HIM,
HERR
DOCTOR!

HANS! I HAVE NEWS!
YOU ARE LEAVING HERE
TODAY, MY BOY! HERR
HEINRICH IS TAKING YOU
TO *HEIM* HOME...TO LIVE!
YOU WILL HELP IN HIS
SHOP, OF COURSE, BUT
THE WORK WILL BE
LIGHT, AND THE HOURS
SHORT! WHAT DO YOU
THINK OF THIS, HANS?



THIS IS
VERY
GOOD
OF YOU,
HERR
HEINRICH!

ACH!
IT IS
NOTHING,
HANS!

WE ARE RIDING IN A CARRIAGE. IT IS
GOOD TO BE OUT OF THE HOSPITAL...
HERR HEINRICH IS A KIND MAN...

YES, *MEAT* IS VERY *SCARCE*, HANS!
BUT I HAVE SAVED CAREFULLY AND
SELL ONLY TO MY OWN CUSTOMERS AND
FRIENDS! BUT *ENOUGH* OF BUSINESS...
LOOK! THERE IS MY ADDRESS...YOUR
HEIM HOME...



HERR HEINRICH'S HOUSE IS BIG. IT IS VERY NICE TO LIVE
IN A BIG HOUSE...



WELL, HANS! HOW DO YOU *LIKE*
IT? DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE
COMFORTABLE?

OH, YES, HERR
HEINRICH! IT IS
A *FINE* HOUSE!

THIS FOOD IS GOOD. I LIKE ESPECIALLY THE PICKLED
MEATS... AND THE WINE...



TO YOUR *GOOD* HEALTH,
HANS! HERE! MORE WINE,
MY BOY! IT IS *GOOD*
FOR YOU!

IT IS *WONDERFUL*
WINE...AND *DELICIOUS*
FOOD, TOO!

MY ROOM...IT HAS NICE THINGS. THE BED IS VERY SOFT,
AND I AM TIRED...



SLEEP *WELL*, HANS! AND
REMEMBER! TOMORROW, WE
GO TO MY *BUTCHER SHOP*!
GOOD-NIGHT!

GOOD-NIGHT, HERR
HEINRICH! I WILL
WORK *HARD* FOR YOU!

ANNN! IT IS WARM HERE... WARM AND DRY. I LIE ON MY
NEW SOFT BED...AND I *DOZE*...



COME, COME! MAKE
UP! ON YOUR FEET!

I AM STABBING... SLASHING... CUTTING HIM TO RIBBONS. I SEE THE BLOOD POURING, AND I AM SORE. HE IS DEAD. AND NOW, MY OVERLEUTNANT IS CALLING... CALLING ME BACK. NO! IT IS NOT MY OVERLEUTNANT. IT IS...



THE AIR IS COOL, BUT I AM WARM. WE ARE WALKING TO HERR HEINRICH'S SHOP. I FEEL GOOD...



HERR LUDMEYER HAS COME. WE ARE DRINKING AND EATING SOOO PICKLED MEATS. AND I GROW TIRED.

I GO TO MY ROOM AND UNDESS AND LIE ON MY SOFT BED... SOFT AND WARM AND DRY.

THIS MEAT! IT IS WONDERFUL! BUT YOU?... YOU DON'T EAT ANY, HERR HEINRICH?

ACH! WHEN YOU ARE A BUTCHER, YOU EAT TOO MUCH MEAT!

HA! HA! BUT COME, HERR LUDMEYER, I MUST SHOW YOU MY BONE DOLLAR!

I WILL GO TO BED NOW! GOODNIGHT!

COME, CORPORAL! WAKE UP! ON YOUR FEET!

HE COMES AT ME AND I SMILE AROUND, SINKING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY... CUTTING, STABBING, SLASHING HIM TO RIBBONS... THE BLOOD POURING, POURING...

I AM SWEETING THE SHOP. I DO THIS EVERY MORNING. AND I HELP HERR HERRICH LIFT THE HEAVY THINGS. I AM STRONG.



WANT? COME GIVE ME A HAND, LIKE A GOOD FELLOW?

YES, HERR HERRICH.

THERE? THAT IS GOOD! HA! HA! NO ONE IN ALL BERLIN HAS AS MUCH MEAT AS I! ANOTHER CUSTOMER IS HERE!



HERR HERRICH IS FRIENDLY. HE IS AGAIN INVITING SOMEONE TO HIS HOUSE.



YES, SUSTAN. WE NEED FINE! RELAXATION! YOU... YOU HERRICH! AND YOUR WIFE! COME BRING ME TO MY HOUSE TONIGHT. WE WILL HAVE SCHNAPPS! WHAT DO YOU SAY?

WIFE! TELL ME! WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

AGAIN I AM DRINKING AND EATING WITH HERR HERRICH'S FRIENDS. MANY TIMES I DO THIS... TONIGHT, I DON'T FEEL GOOD. DRINKING... TOO MUCH...



OH, FRAU SHOTS. YOU HAVE TASTED NOTHING UNTIL YOU HAVE TRIED THE IMPORTED FINE'S IN MY WINE CELLAR. COME, SUSTAN... FRAU SHOTS? I WILL SHOW YOU!

YOU ARE A GENEROUS HOST, HERR HERRICH!

I... I AM VERY SLEEPY! I WILL GO TO BED NOW! GOODNIGHT.

I AM IN MY ROOM! IT IS DARK HERE! I AM DIZZY! EVERYTHING IS SPINNING AND I AM FALLING... FALLING...



M... MY HEAD! IT HURTS! IT... IT IS WARM AND DRY HERE! IT IS GOOD TO FEEL WARM AND DRY. I AM SO TIRED, AND



COME, CORPORAL! WAKE UP! ON YOUR FEET! I HAVE FOR YOU AN IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT.





HURRY, CORPORAL! THERE IS MUCH TO DO TONIGHT! COME! COME!

YES, OVERLEUTENANT!

IT IS COLD AND DAMP AND I SHIVER AND MY TEETH CHATTER...

THIS WAY, CORPORAL! THIS WAY... BUT BE CAREFUL! THE ENEMY IS JUST OVER THAT HILL...



I MUST BE QUIET. I WILL HIDE IN THE SHELL HOLE AND MAKE OUT MY REPORT...

NOVEMBER 21, 1917
10:40 P.M. ENEMY POSITION: 80 YARDS WEST OF...

LISTEN, HANST! LISTEN! TAKE THIS! YOUR MAUSER...



SOMEONE IS IN THIS SHELL HOLE WITH ME. I TURN, GRIPPING MY MAUSER...



THERE HE IS, HANST! GET HIM! GET HIM!

AN ENEMY SOLDIER... I SWING AROUND, SENDING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY... FEELING THE CRUMMING BONE... HEARING THE DUCKING SOUND...



GOOD, HANST! GOOD! NOW, GO TO WORK!

I PULL OUT MY BAYONET AND THRUST AGAIN, STANDING, GLASHING, CUTTING HIM TO RIBBONS...



CAREFUL, HANST! CAREFUL!

I SEE HIS FACE... HIS EYES... AND THE BLOOD POURING... POURING... AND I AM SO...



HANST! WHY DO YOU STOP? FINISH! FINISH YOUR WORK!

MY HEAD HURTS WHERE I STRUCK IT AND MY DREAM VANISHES, AND I AM STANDING IN A DARK CAMP CELLAR BEFORE A...A...



OH, LORD! A BUTCHER'S CHOPPING BLOCK!

NO OH HANG! FEMINIST!

GHORE! THERE... THERE IS A BODY ON THE BLOCK! IT IS... HEAR SHOTS! AND THIS IS NO BAYONET! THIS IS A CLEAVER IN MY HAND!



GHORP! I ORDER YOU! FEMINIST! YOUR ASSIGNMENT!

I...I HAVE DONE A HORRIBLE TERRIBLE THING! BUT... BUT HOW MANY OTHER TIMES HAVE I DONE THIS? HOW MANY OTHER TIMES HAS HE...HE...? OOOOH...MY HEAD! MY MEMORY! IT'S COMING BACK!



HANG! NOT SO UPTIGHT!

I REMEMBER NOW! YES! YES! I WAS A BUTCHER... A GOOD BUTCHER! THEN A SOLDIER! I WAS A SOLDIER AND I KILLED A WAR IN A SHELL HOLE! THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION! EVERY NIGHT I HAVE DREAMED OF THAT KILLING! Y...YOU! YOU MADE ME DO THIS FEMINIST WORK WHILE I DREAMED!



YES!...YES! YOU FOUND OUT I WAS A BUTCHER! LIKE NO OTHER SHOP IN ALL GERMANY, YOURS IS FULL OF MEAT! ALL OF THE VISITORS YOU HAVE BROUGHT DOWN HERE? YES! OF COURSE! YOUR EXCLUSIVE SHOP IS FILLED WITH HUMAN MEAT!!



N...NO! NO!

HE COMES AT ME...AND EVERYTHING GOES BLACK. IT IS SUDDENLY COLD AND DAMP AND HE IS THE EVILEST SOLDIER AND I AM STABBING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY...CRUNCHING THE BONE...HEARING THE SUCCOR SOUNDS... STABBING...SLASHING...CUTTING HIM TO RIBBONS...HIS FACE...HIS EYES...THE BLOOD FOUNTAINS...POURING...



GOOD LORD!

GHORE...

HIE, HIE! WELL, I REMEMBER THAT'S MY DELIRIUM DISH FOR THIS ISSUE OF G.I.'S MAG. POOR HANG! THAT BLOW ON THE NOSE IN CLEARED IT FOR A FEW MINUTES... BUT HE SOON SLIPPED BACK INTO THE OLD GRIND! ANYWAY, HE WAS PUT INTO A HUGE WARM DRY ROOM WITH CUSHIONED WALLS AND BARRED WINDOWS AND HE NEVER ATE ANOTHER HAMBURGER AS LONG AS HE LIVED! 'WELL, NOW WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN V.E.'S MAG, THE VALLEY OF HORROR!



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